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MORRIS IS TRUE BLUE FOR HIS PORTRAIT ON COMMONS WEBSITE



James Morris, poses for the website

JAMES Morris was one of hundreds of politicians to pose for a new set of portraits for the House of Commons new website.

The Conservative MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis wore party colours for the shot, a light blue tie against a navy suit.

Mr Morris, who has held his seat since 2010, has campaigned for better mental health services and devolution.

In the 2017 General Election he took a huge 51.9 per cent share of the votes and managed to retain his seat despite Labour's widely-sup-

ported Ian Cooper taking 40 per cent. Mr Morris has also generally toed the party line and voted in accordance with his Conservative colleagues during his tenure.

The pictures were snapped by celebrity photographer Chris McAndrew, who is known for his work with the likes of rapper Snoop Dogg and leading Hollywood actors American Adrian Brody, known for his work in The Pianist and TV Sherlock Holmes, Benedict Cumberbatch. Mr McAndrew photographed 90 per cent of MP's over a two day period, producing around 15,000

images in total. The photos have been posted on the new parliamentary website for public view and given to the MP's themselves.

Carrie Barclay, head of UK Parliament's digital team, said the portraits had been well received.

She said: "There's a clear need for members of the public to be able to recognise the person that represents them in Parliament, but seeing how so many people have used them to strike up conversations and share jokes and stores has been really exciting."

SERVICES

Royal Mail delivery office in relocation

THE Royal Mail delivery office in Oldbury could be closed and operations moved to Halesowen, bosses have revealed.

The move is part of proposals by Royal Mail bosses to join up delivery services by moving operations to the Coombs Wood office. A Royal Mail spokesman said workers from the Bridge Street office would move to Halesowen and the change would not result in any jobs being lost or any loss in service to members of the public.

Talks have begun with the Communications Workers Union and staff at both sites.

The spokesman said the move would 'increase efficiency' and improve facilities for people living in the B68 and B69 post-code areas.

CRIME

Brazen thieves in raid on shed

BRAZEN thieves stole padlocks, lawnmowers and a drill from a shed.

They targeted the outbuilding at the back of a home in St Kenelm's Road in Romsley, near Halesowen, in the early hours of Saturday morning.

Police said crooks stole two heavy duty padlocks as well as a Hayter sit-on mower, a Mansfield lawn mower and a Dremel drill before making off.

Call police on 101.

RETAIL

Merry Hill in talks over empty shop

MERRY HILL owners intu say they are in talks with a potential new tenant for the empty BHS store at the shopping centre.

The company is reshaping the centre to reduce the number of smaller units.

The news comes as the owners also announced dramatic plans for a cinema and restaurants extension.

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INSIDE

SIGHT JUST HAS TO BE SEEN



PAGE 3

Fundraising drive after 'phenomenal' turnout this year HELP CARNIVAL BE EVEN BETTER

A BIG fundraising appeal has been launched to help make next year's Halesowen Carnival come back with a bang after this year's edition was a big success.

The appeal comes as the free event attracted more than 7,000 revelers last month in Highfield Park. Organisers have set up a Just Giving page in order to raise funds for the event, which has seen year-on-year growth since its return from a 30-year hiatus in 2015.

Councillor Stuart Henley, carnival chairman, has taken to Twitter to appeal to the public. He said: "We're hard at work planning for next year's event."

"We will be keeping the food and drink festival that we trialled this year due to how popular it was, we have a theme in mind for next year's event and will announce this when finalised."

Minimum

"If everyone who attended this year's event donated a minimum of £1 each we would raise the money we are after."

Mr Henley was brought on board in 2015 to help resurrect the event from its long stretch of inactivity.

Costing up to £8,000 to put on, the carnival puts on craft stalls, live music, food and drink, a fair and dog show.

Mr Henley added: "The event this year, it was a lot better than what we expected."

"Just going on what the security said and what the first aiders said, we got about five or six thousand this year."

"All the food and drink providers want to come back next year anyway. It's really good."

"Some photos we got on our Facebook page, you couldn't see any grass."

A search for volunteers has also been

Report by Luke Bartlett

launched as the small committee behind the carnival, made up of just four volunteers, look to prepare for next year's event – scheduled to take place on July 7.

Event organiser Chris Milton, 51, from Halesowen, said: "This year it was phenomenal, it exceeded all expectations, it was fantastic."

"I don't know what six or seven thousand people look like but we had the two fields, and at one stage it was almost impossible to move."

"Already we're having people booking their pitches for next year."

Workers are responsible for vital planning of the event and carrying out tasks during the day such as jingling collection buckets, handing out the programs, selling raffle tickets, litter picking and running the carnival stalls.

So far the campaign, which was launched a fortnight ago, has raised £10 of the £5,000 target. To back the campaign for next year's festival, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/halesowencarnivalandmusicfestival

Jordanne aces it – while pregnant



Halesowen wheelchair tennis star Jordanne Whaley has confirmed she won her fourth successive Wimbledon women's wheelchair doubles title while pregnant. The 25-year-old, pictured above, left, with her tennis partner Yui Kamiji, has tweeted to announce her pregnancy with partner and coach Marc McCarroll. Boon – Back Page

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: dudley.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
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MOTORING: Liz Barratt
Tel: 01384 353244
E-mail: liz.barratt@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
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DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
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Campaign to keep children safe online



Anne Millward

A COUNCILLOR has backed a ‘vital’ campaign to help young people avoid child sexual exploitation online.

The See Me, Hear Me campaign encourages children to stay safe while browsing the internet, in particular gaming platforms, social media and chatrooms.

Councillor Anne Millward, cabinet member for children’s services at Dudley Council, added how it was crucial for parents and carers to be open when talking to their children about their experiences online. The campaign advises

children not to give our personal information, not to meet up with anyone met online and that offenders can easily hide behind a fake and anonymous profile.

It also advises them not to upload any images or videos they wouldn’t want their parent to see to the internet.

Councillor Millward said: “With the internet and, in particular, social media and online gaming becoming such a big part of young people’s daily lives, we want them to be able to enjoy their activities without making themselves vulnerable. While we can’t monitor

every click, we should be open with our children and talk to them about online dangers.

“By giving young people a few key safety tips about how to stay safe online and encouraging them to share it with their friends we can stop the perpetrators in their tracks.”

The campaign website can be found at www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

Anyone concerned about children’s safety online can contact West Midlands Police on 101, speak in confidence to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Mother and son jailed over plot to kill man

A MOTHER and her son have been put behind bars for a total of 28 years after a ‘merciless’ attack on her boyfriend who was lured into an ambush and attacked with an array of weapons.

Balbir Kaur recruited 21-year-old Manvir Singh to murder Samson Masih, 37, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 43-year-old knew when the victim was coming to her home and told her son who arranged an ambush, explained Mr Robert Price, prosecuting. Both men arrived at the flat in Alfred Gunn House, Thompson Road, Oldbury, after Kaur told Singh: “Come and kill him.”

The men left the flat together and walked to nearby Primrose Bank where the son had arranged for four men to lie in wait in a parked car.

Ferocious

At the pre-arranged signal of Singh grabbing the unsuspecting victim round the neck they joined in the ferocious beating armed with a machete-type weapon, metal bar and knife. Mr Masih suffered a depressed fracture of the skull and broken bones in his back, leg and face during the October 12 onslaught. Nine months later he is still suffering both physically and psychologically, the court heard.

Mother of three Kaur wanted him dead after discovering his sole interest was sex not marriage, it was suggested.

Mr Barry Grennan, defending, argued: “There was a significant degree of provocation.” Mr Gurdeep Garcha, for Singh, of Green Lane, Walsall, said: “He is extremely protective of his mother.”

A jury found Kaur guilty of soliciting murder and convicted Singh of attempted murder. Both pleaded not guilty.

Judge James Burbidge QC jailed the mother for 11 years while her son – said to represent a danger to the public – was given an extended 17 year sentence, meaning he must serve at least two thirds.

intu’s cinematic vision for Merry Hill



Artist impression showing how the proposed leisure extension at Merry Hill could look

MERRY HILL owners intu have revealed dramatic plans for a new cinema and a string of restaurants as part of a major extension of the shopping centre.

The company has just bought the building that houses the existing Odeon cinema at Merry Hill and is now in talks with the chain to move it into a new building that would be constructed at the rear of the centre.

It would be surrounded by a number of new restaurants as part

of intu’s aim to double the amount of entertainment and eating space they provide at Merry Hill.

The scheme, expected to go to Dudley Council planners later this year, is part of intu’s £100 million programme of improvements at the shopping centre over the next few years.

Matthew Roberts, intu’s chief financial officer, reaffirmed the company’s belief that Merry Hill could become one of its ‘best performing assets’ in the coming years, rival-

ling the likes of intu’s Trafford Centre and Lakeside in Essex.

“We are very happy with the way Merry Hill is performing at the moment,” he said.

“We want to extend the centre at the rear to incorporate a new cinema and surround it with what a lot of restaurants. Over the next few years our plan is to double the amount of leisure and food at Merry Hill from five to 10 per cent.”

The current cinema building is leased by Odeon, said Mr Roberts.

£1.2m canal revamp will be beneficial for residents

COUNCIL chiefs say more than £1 million will be spent upgrading a three-mile stretch of the canal between three railway stations.

The canal towpath between Smethwick Galton Bridge, Sandwell & Dudley and Dudley Port rail stations is set for a £1.2m revamp, which bosses claim will have ‘health benefits’ for the local communities who live around them as well as to lifestyle.

A council report says the cash will come from a West Midlands Combined Authority fund to improve cycle routes in the Midlands.

According to the authority, the Managing Short Trips strategy aims to ‘create an extensive, safe and coherent network of well-designed off and on-road links’ across the region that will encourage active lifestyles.

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways, said: “Any improvements that we can make to the canals – either appearance, safety or other things – are to be welcomed.

“This work will benefit the community in a number of ways, that can be either exercise or for seeing wildlife and nature, as well as making them safer,” Councillor Hosell added of the move to improve the stretch of canal between the three stations.

Meerkats enjoy new sand at zoo

MEERKATS at a Black Country attraction are enjoying bucket loads of fun after more sand was delivered for their enclosure.

Zookeepers at Dudley Zoo mixed in mealworms with the sand and filled buckets to make sandcastles around the enclosure.

Assistant curator Jay Haywood said: “The meerkats immediately dived into the sandcastles to find the treats hidden inside.

“Meerkats are excellent diggers and have very long claws which help them.

“They typically dig underground, but this is also a fun way for visitors to see them at work. The sandcastles only lasted seconds, but at least they did the sand spreading across the floor for us, which saved us a job!”

Vinyl record fair to spin fans round

A HUGE vinyl fair is coming. Vinyl fans will be in for a treat with a range of records on offer including punk, rock, soul and hip hop at the Custard Factory in Digbeth, Birmingham. The event will take place on August 12 between 10.30am and 3.30pm. Admission is £3.

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Redundancy led man to growing cannabis

A MAN who decided to grow cannabis for a living after being made redundant has been spared a prison sentence.

Police found 28 plants being grown by Craig Faulkner when they visited his home on an unrelated matter, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. "He told police he did not smoke cannabis and had become engaged in the operation to make money," Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting, said.

The 32-year-old defendant turned to crime after losing his job of delivering and installing garden sheds, it was said.

Stupid

Mr Rupert Jones, defending, said: "He then made the stupid decision to grow cannabis to earn money."

"It was a means of retaining an ongoing income but was not going to make him rich."

Faulkner had featured in a case involving the possession of drugs the day before the cannabis farm was discovered in Adelaide Street, Brierley Hill, on March 29, the court was told.

Faulkner, now of Eddy Road, Kidderminster, pleaded guilty to producing cannabis and was given a 12-month jail sentence suspended for 18 months.

He was ordered to do 100 hours' unpaid work and pay £400 towards the cost of the case.

Police officers to have spit hoods

SPIT hoods will be introduced for 4,500 West Midlands Police officers from October.

The force said its staff were spat at 231 times last year and the lightweight mesh hoods would be used to protect officers and prevent the spread of disease.

The equipment will be issued to officers after they have completed training, and will be used only on suspects who have spat or threatened to spit.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said he expected spit hoods to be used 'on few occasions'.

"We want to protect our officers during their duty to keep us safe against those people they come in contact with," he added.

Let us drink tea

CHURCH officials are inviting people to afternoon tea.

Hurst Green Methodist Church, in Narrow Lane, Halesowen, will be welcoming visitors on Saturday from 2-4pm. A cream tea costs £3.

Anger as police baton video goes viral



The video of the incident in Birmingham

THE Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is investigating after a video showing police using force went viral.

The video showed an officer using his baton during an arrest in Birmingham which was posted on Facebook and Twitter on Monday night.

The footage reveals how an altercation broke out between a man and plain-clothed policemen who had been speaking to a group of men on the street.

The officers then become embroiled in a scuffle. Two officers then attempt

to wrestle the man to the floor as a third draws his baton and strikes the man at least four times.

Officers featured in the footage were stood down from normal duties on Tuesday. Now, the case has been referred to the IPCC.

Abdul Hamid Faruki shared one video with West Midlands Police on Twitter, asking the force 'is this appropriate policing?'

Meanwhile a different video posted by The Network for Police Monitoring has been retweeted more than 700 times, while another Facebook clip

has been watched more than 5,000 times. And now the officers featured in the footage have been stood down from normal duties while investigations on the Upper Sutton Street incident on Sunday are made.

Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, said: "I am looking at the incident very closely and I have raised it with the Chief Constable. I am assured that he is taking it very seriously. Stop and search is a necessary, but intrusive policing power. It is very important that it is used fairly."

Sex offender headed for Spain after his escape

A SEX offender escaped from a care centre and fled to Spain, shortly after being spotted applying for his first passport, a judge heard.

Twenty-year-old Jordan Goodwin, also known as Jordan Hagan, stuffed pillows under the covers of his bed to give the impression he was sleeping, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Then he forced open a secure window and ran away from the Huntercombe Centre in Underhill Street, Langley, that caters for people with mental health problems, on March 13.

He left a letter of explanation at the home of his partner and flew out of the country, said Mr Andrew Tucker, prosecuting. He added: "He got to Spain but was arrested pretty quickly. A number of weeks earlier he had been seen filling in a passport application form and when asked why came up with some innocuous reason." But Judge Amjad Nawaz asked: "What other purpose could there be for a passport?"

Warrant

The defendant had been made the subject of an indefinite hospital order at Derby Crown Court in 2011 after committing a serious sexual offence at the age of 12, it was said.

A European Arrest Warrant was issued four days after he vanished and, on March 24, he was flown from Madrid to Birmingham.

He was then detained by police at the airport on landing.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said: "There was some element of planning but whether the authorities should have been aware of this is another matter. He feels that the hospital order is no longer appropriate and he should now be back in society."

Goodwin admitted escaping from custody and was given six months detention in a Young Offenders Institution.

However, he had already spent more than half the term in custody waiting for the case to be resolved. That meant he was eligible for immediate release and could be transferred to a secure unit in Northamptonshire to continue his treatment.

Dennis's garden is blooming lovely



So proud – Dennis Amos in his beautiful garden in Farm Road, Oldbury

A RETIRED builder has transformed his garden into a blooming delight.

Dennis Amos, aged 72, only began to sow seeds in his greenhouse a few years ago. Now he has around 18 different varieties of plants in 20 pots and 32 hanging baskets.

Mr Amos, from Farm Road, Oldbury, is especially proud of his begonias which are bursting with bright colours. He said: "This year is the best yet. I was really excited when I saw all the colour. Begonias are my speciality. I am amazed with it this year as all the plants look superb."

"I have only started doing this since I retired and it makes the garden look incredibly beautiful and shining."

Before the grandfather-of-four retired he would only keep his lawn and borders tidy at his 100ft by 30ft garden. Now it is a picturesque paradise.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Four in five happy with rail journey

MORE than four in five rail passengers in the West Midlands are satisfied with their journeys, according to a new survey.

Some 92 per cent of users said they were satisfied with Virgin Trains' service and 84 per cent with London Midland – slightly higher than the national average.

Overall, 83 per cent of people were satisfied with their last train journey, according to Transport Focus's spring survey of 27,000 passengers.

This is an increase of three per cent compared with the same period last year and is the joint-highest figure since autumn 2012.

Viewers can make impression on TV

VIEWERS of TV station Made in Birmingham could see their faces on their own television screen with its new Facebook competition.

The channel, which also serves the Black Country, is looking for up to 20 members of the public to feature in its new 'channel idents' – a short sequence between programmes to identify the station – that will see the winning viewer's photo included in a range of animated city scenes.

For more details on how to get involved and be featured visit www.madeinbirmingham.tv/facebook

Parks helpers receive awards

VOLUNTEERS who help to look after parks, allotments and other green spaces have been honoured at an awards evening.

Seven groups were presented with awards at The Great Green Get Together, held inside the Walled Garden at Wollescote Park, Stourbridge.

The awards are a celebratory event to thank volunteers at Dudley Council-owned parks. They were presented by Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, and chief officer for environmental services Matt Williams.

Roadworks to improve safety and reduce jams

WORK is being carried out at three locations to improve road safety and reduce congestion.

Traffic lights are being installed as part of a £100,000 scheme at Doulton Road, Rowley Regis. At Garratts Lane, Cradley Heath, the road is being widened at the junction with Wrights Lane to relieve congestion.

And a puffin crossing is being installed in Gospel Oak Road, Tipton, to help improve pedestrian safety.

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MP's fury as beauty spot is vandalised 'mindlessly'

DAMAGE to a nature reserve has been branded a 'total disgrace' by an MP.

Ian Austin said he was disappointed to see Bumble Hole Nature Reserve 'spoiled' by the actions of 'mindless' yobs.

The site in Netherton, featuring grassland, woodland, canals and ponds, has been defaced by fly-tipping and a fire. Dudley Council was called into action by a user on social media after he identified a severely burned out car and a bundle of litter near the entrance.

Permission is granted to get rid of building

A LANDMARK town centre building has been granted consent to be demolished.

Businesses at Pioneer House, in Halesowen, were informed by their landlord of the decision at the start of the month - along with the bombshell they may have to leave the premises in less than three months.

Now, council planners have granted consent for its demolition in October.

Landlord Khosrow Omidvar said all the businesses had been aware plans could go forward for demolition and he would be supporting them in finding alternative premises.

The building is currently home to KMM Tyres, APT Health and Fitness, Gracie Barra Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and also Star Taxis.

It was best known for housing Halesowen Sports Club until a fire forced it to move last year.

Mr Austin, Labour MP for Dudley North, served on the council for four years from 1991 and said he was 'outraged' by the vehicle and bags of rubbish. He posted online: "Someone's had their car nicked, Dudley Council have to clear it up and local residents have their park spoilt. Total disgrace."

Mindless

Mr Austin added: "Isn't this outrageous? Let's hope @dudleymbc can get it cleared asap, but they wouldn't have to if mindless people didn't dump it."

The small car, pictured sitting completely ruined on a patch of concrete, appears to have been lit and left to burn out. Resident Craig Turtton-Lyndel posted pictures of the site on Twitter and said: "Lovely find on the walk across Bumble Hole today. Any news on removal?"

"[A] few more dumped items at the entrance to Bumble Hole on St George's Road.

"Such a shame people don't respect the area. Who is responsible for the general upkeep of the reserve?"

Dudley Council announced online they had passed the incident on to their Green Care Team for investigation and removal.

The area hosts the Black Country Boating Festival every September.

Team getting pretty muddy in aid of charity



From left, Lisa Kelly, Jo Robb, Adele Hackett, Lucie Bonehill and Sue Stevens, all staff at BCTG, prepare

A QUINTET of business and apprenticeship training staff are swapping suits for training gear to raise money for cancer research.

Staff at BCTG, which is based in Taylors Lane, Oldbury, are preparing to get muddy in a sponsored challenge for Cancer Research UK.

The five women, who work for the training company, are taking part in the Cancer Research UK Pretty Muddy Run having chosen how best

to focus their fundraising efforts. They will join hundreds of others at Sandwell Valley on Saturday, September 30 for the three-mile challenge which they are hoping won't leave them stuck in the mud.

The team is hoping to raise hundreds of pounds between them for the charity.

Jo Robb, who is the team organiser, said: "BCTG has always raised money for good causes, some years we

hold random acts of kindness around Christmas and in others we take up organised challenges like this one.

"Cancer Research UK is a good cause and we hope to raise more than £500 between us all, as well as have some fun getting muddy."

To donate to the team ahead of the challenge and to raise awareness a justgiving page has been set up at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bctg-pretymuddy>

Figures reveal over 3k drive aged 90-plus

MORE than 3,000 people aged 90 or over still hold driving licences in the West Midlands.

Latest figures from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency show there are 2,750 men and 979 women in their 90s who hold licences locally.

It comes as national data showed 248 people aged over 100 still hold valid licences.

The West Midlands has the third highest number of over 90s with licences, behind Hampshire and Greater London.

Quality

Once motorists reach the age of 70 they have to renew their licence every three years and answer written questions about medical conditions and eyesight quality.

As senior citizens are more likely to have a range of health problems and slower reaction times, there has been plenty of heated debate on the issue of the safety of older drivers, particularly after crashes involving them.

However, a study from Swansea University last year claimed elderly road users are no more dangerous than other drivers.

Professor Charles Musselwhite said while reaction times decreased, this was compensated by older drivers taking more care.

MP announces his new surgery dates

JOHN SPELLAR, Labour MP for Warley, will be on hand to listen to any issues people have.

He will be at the Community Hall on Pound Road, Oldbury, on August 18, October 6 and November 10 and Smethwick Council House in High Street, Smethwick, on August 19, September 9 and October 7.

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School meal price increase for borough

SCHOOL dinner prices are going up by 10 pence a day in Dudley – making them among the priciest.

The cost of school meals at primary, secondary schools and academies will rise from the start of term in September going up to £2.30 – meaning parents will now pay £11.50 a week.

The price of individual items at snack shops across the borough's 105 schools will also rise by 4.5 per cent. The changes are expected to bring in an extra £144,000 on top of the £3.2 million already paid for school meals in the borough.

Council bosses say that it is due to the soaring cost of food.

It means Dudley will be among the authority with the highest charges, alongside Sandwell at £2.30, Birmingham £2.20, Staffordshire and Walsall at £2.10. Councillor Ian Kettle, Dudley's cabinet member for planning and economic development, who authorised the decision, said: "Research by the staff and officers showed that it was necessary."

"Around 50 to 60 per cent of the increase is annual to cover inflation. There is not a great increment on top of that."

"There will be some families who will feel it, we are aware of that, but unfortunately these things need to be done."

Large traffic delays as chaos hits roads

COMMUTERS faced traffic chaos as the first weekday of major roadworks caused huge tailbacks.

Drivers faced delays of more than half an hour, with the M5 roadworks between junctions 1 and 2 also impacting on the Birmingham New Road. The Oldbury viaduct project has also stepped up a gear with a contraflow system now in place.

At last! Merlin's bar is back in use and will save 14 jobs

Closed woods 'still unsafe' say trust

POLICE have received 28 reports of anti-social behaviour at woodland shut to keep troublemakers out in the last five years, it has been revealed.

Uffmoor Wood, near Halesowen, was closed by The Woodland Trust as a 'last resort' in May due to dog attacks, sexual activity and drug dealing. And a Freedom of Information request – submitted by a Facebook campaign group set up in the wake of the closure – has revealed 28 incidents have been reported to police since 2012.

However, bosses at the trust say the site is still deemed as being unsafe, with reports continuing to be received about illegal activities.

A spokesperson for The Friends Of Uffmoor Woods said: "Many people are still extremely angered by the closure of the site and mostly through the fact that the communication has been appalling."

"People also believe a lot of the reports about the goings-on in the site have been fabricated, because users have been walking there for many years and never witnessed anything that has been reported, and feel the FOI request shows that."

However, bosses at the trust say the site will remain closed for now.

Hollie Anderson, spokesperson for The Woodland Trust, said: "What is not indicated through these figures is the severity of the incidents we are facing, sometimes on a daily basis, such as dogging and drug-dealing."



Uffmoor Wood, near Halesowen, which is owned by The Woodland Trust

A FORMER wine bar empty for more than 20 years is to get a £650,000 overhaul to help revamp the town centre and save jobs.

The former Merlin's building, on Wolverhampton Street in Dudley, has stood derelict for two decades and council chiefs want to refurbish it in order to save 14 jobs and create four more.

A deal has been agreed for it to house a recruitment company. The refurbishment works will start this autumn and look set to be complete by spring next year.

Blights

The regeneration will 'assist and deal with a long-term dilapidated building that blights this part of the conservation area' said council chiefs.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed welcomed plans, adding: "This is really positive for Dudley. This building has been shut down for a long time now and is in need of repair. I am thrilled that work can hopefully start on this soon."

A report on the revamp said: "The property is owned by Dudley MBC. After a lengthy marketing exercise, the council has secured a forward sale of the refurbished building to a local recruitment company."

"The council therefore has the opportunity to retain 14 jobs within the town centre, create four jobs, provide a business assist and deal with a long-term dilapidated building that blights this part of the Conservation area."

The bar originally opened as Merlin's in the early 90s.



The former Merlin's bar in Dudley

Martial arts centre with gym agreed

A NEW gym and Chinese martial arts centre has been given the go-ahead to open in the heart of West Bromwich.

The Shaolin Mantis Project will deliver a 'unique style of Chinese martial arts', giving young people the chance to keep active and learn a new skill.

Bosses behind the scheme also said they were hopeful the centre could help divert young people away from crime by giving them something different to do.

The martial arts centre will open in Union Street, taking over the site of a former electrical suppliers, after being approved by Sandwell Council.

West Bromwich councillor Bawa Dhallu said: "I think it is a very good idea."

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Electric cars can lead to problems

SHOWING that it hasn't lost its knack for capturing the public mood and getting to grips with the burning subject that is on everybody's mind, the Government has announced it will be banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040.

The future, it seems, is in silent, shiny electric cars, not those noisy, old-fashioned gas guzzlers. Which is rather odd, because electric cars have been around since the 1850s, and Wolverhampton industrialist Thomas Parker was one of the world's leading producers of them in the second half of the 19th century. We're hardly talking cutting edge technology.

And the reason why they didn't really catch on was because petrol and diesel power were much more efficient. Plus you don't have to trail a lead down 14 storeys if you live in a tower block.

Perhaps we need to invest in our infrastructure a little, you know, metal slots down the middle of the road, and hand-held throttles to control the speed. Maybe a plastic lap counter in the pit-stop to see how fast you're going. Let's hope they don't decide we need to move over to electric ships and aeroplanes. The extension cables will be massive.

□ □ □

SPARE a thought for poor Clare Balding, having to get by on £200,000 a year for presenting commentaries on show-jumping and dressage.

Clare is one of 40 female BBC staff who have written complaining about pay inequality following the revelation that some of the corporation's male stars are being paid millions.

While it is ridiculous to suggest that Michal Husain, who is still learning the ropes, should be paid the same as veteran John Humphries, the malcontents do have a point. Is Gary Lineker really worth as much as 10 female sports presenters? Of course not.

No doubt, the BBC will spend the next few years navel-gazing about how to address this inequality, but the solution is simple, even if it is not what I suspect Balding & Co have in mind. Pay them all less. If the prime minister can manage on £150,000 a year, then so can Gary Lineker. And Clare Balding for that matter.

And if, as the argument goes, it means they are poached by ITV offering more money, what's the problem? I don't suppose the viewers care what channel they watch the football or horse-dancing on.

The BBC keeps telling us its role is to make unique programmes that the private sector would never provide. Fine, so get on with it. And leave the big-money, populist programmes to the private companies.

Website may say dry but really it's chucking it down



Kate on tour has raised claim that trips would be better if we had a Royal Yacht



Chancellor Philip Hammond – is he the target for the poison darts?



Jasper Carrott is due to go under the knife for major heart surgery next month

It's whether we can believe what we read

USING something called a supercomputer, the Met Office tells us we must expect record winter rainfall "over the next few years." By pure coincidence, this announcement came as I was consulting the BBC weather website which told me that, at that very moment, my postcode was dry and would remain so all morning. It was chucking it down. I have a lot of time for the Met Office. Looking ahead two or three days, it is much more accurate than it ever used to be. But there are times when it doesn't even know what the weather is doing now. And guesstimating what the weather will be doing years from now is like trying to nail seaweed to a pinecone.

AFTER a couple of spinal twinges, I typed "bad back" into Google and found this: "You know you're getting old when your back goes out more than you do."

THE nationwide obesity epidemic doesn't affect only humans. A reader saw a couple setting off with their plump Labrador for a walk in the Yorkshire Dales. The first stile through the dry-stone wall was one of those ancient ones, made with two upright stones and a narrow gap between. The Labrador was too fat to squeeze through and too heavy to lift over. End of walk.

THE successful European tour by Prince William, Kate and the kids has inevitably raised the claim that trips like this would be much better if we had a Royal Yacht. Royalists get all misty-eyed at the memory of Her Majesty stepping ashore in foreign parts from the immaculately polished Britannia. Wouldn't it be grand to build Britannia II? No it wouldn't, for two reasons. The first is that even the biggest royal yacht would be dwarfed by some of the mega-vessels owned by the global elite of Middle East

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



princes, Russian oligarchs, dodgy businessmen and Mr Bigs of the drug industry. The second reason is that we actually have a magnificent Royal Yacht which, conveniently, already carries the Queen's name. HMS Queen Elizabeth is our shiny new 65,000-ton aircraft carrier. For the next few years it will have no aircraft and no conceivable military purpose. Let us therefore paint it white, deck it with bunting, stuff the fridges full of Pimm's, fly the Royal Standard and send it around the world to spread goodwill. And if it accidentally bumps into one or two megayachts and sinks them, so much the better.

IN the debate on gender stereotyping, I referred recently to that ancient institution, the battle of the sexes. A reader tells me his strategy is total capitulation at every opportunity. He regularly asks his wife: "What do you want doing wrong next?"

CAN Theresa May and her wobbly, minority Government survive the entire length of a full Parliament, with its Cabinet members squabbling like schoolchildren in the playground? The Cabinet is in an unprecedented state of disarray, with malcontent members aiming their poison darts at Chancellor Philip Hammond.

JASPER Carrott, 72, is going under the knife for major heart surgery next month, followed by three months of recuperation and I feel sure we all wish this great national treasure well. I interviewed him 12 years ago when he was 60 and

in great form as he unveiled his first Rock With Laughter event in Birmingham. I can see him now, leaning forward in his chair conspiratorially, as though he was sharing some great medical secret. "You know, Pete," he smiled, "we're going to be the first generation that never grows old." Time has a great way of throwing that sort of prediction back in your face. Carrott and the rest of the baby boomers have had a great time on this planet but immortality has never been part of the deal. The closest today's seventies-somethings may get to Carrott's prediction is to become the first generation that never grows up. Which, it has to be said, is better than nothing.

WHITEHALL'S plan to ban petrol and diesel vehicles from our roads by 2040, announced a couple of days ago, is presumably based on the hope that technology will deliver stronger and longer-ranged electric vehicles. At present, it takes a brave, or extremely rich, motorist to invest £40,000 in a car with a range of only 150 miles and no towing capacity. Unless we get a new generation of electric engines, we can kiss goodbye to the joys of caravanning. And what becomes of the traveller community is anyone's guess. One contributor to the Caravan Club website writes glumly: "Now you know why the travellers have kept their horses."

MEANWHILE, some mathematically-minded folk have been doing the sums on how much power recharging several cars at the same time will demand from the average household wiring system. One Daily Telegraph reader predicts "Circuit breakers would pop or wiring would melt." He wonders whether every house in the land will have to be rewired.

TALKING POINT



No excuse for lack of grace and social skills

IGNORANT, anti-social or just plain rude. Whatever you want to call it, it is bang out of order.

We bring up our children – or we should – to learn social skills as well as academic ones. Good manners, the ability to communicate politely, etc. Yes the occasional swear word may creep in, especially when some boy racer driver cuts you up on a corner, but on the whole constant swearing is just unacceptable.

These social skills are so important. No matter what academic talents a person may have first impressions count, and if they are not well mannered or smartly dressed for occasions such as a job interview in most cases they should be shown the door.

Recently back from a lovely holiday in France – and I am not mentioning this because of the Brexit debate – I noticed how many of the older people, my generation, are totally lacking in social graces.

They push in, never say pardon, and do not respond when you try to be friendly or help by opening doors for them.

They give the impression that they don't want you there. Maybe they don't, but they must remember that a lot of these areas are dependent on us tourists.

Family holidays there with our children were always treasured. It is a beautiful country and having quality time with the kids was always a treat – even though it did cost us a fortune in drinks and ice creams!

But this year I was shocked by the behaviour of the young parents. Take for instance, and we saw a lot of such examples, one couple eating out in a restaurant with their young children.

Both parents were glued to their mobile phones with no interaction with the children – or even with each other. It is often said that the worst thing you can do – worse even than telling off children – is to ignore them. They were obviously guilty as charged!

And what an example to set the young ones. It is no wonder that when the children get older they will be doing exactly the same thing, on their phones instead of talking to each other.

They sometimes say that families who eat together stay together but maybe not if most of the meal time is spent staring at their mobiles. Instead show them good manners and respect, listen to what they have to say and they too will show respect in return.

It will bode them well for their future.

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Heartening that MP backtracked over flag

IT'S heartening to see that MP Ms Eleanor Smith has backtracked on her comments regarding the Black Country Flag. I have been involved in the festival since its outset.

Back to the issue of the flag, I was saddened to hear the initial views of it being racist. Much of the work I do is within issue-based community projects that often cross communities. I therefore experience first hand the work done by other ethnic groups to bring communities together. We are a long way off from being multi-cultural in the sense we all understand other's

Pete Lowe has no idea of the mess

I WOULD like to respond to the letter in the Chronicle, July 20, by Pete Lowe, whose comments showed a complete lack of understanding of the mess this country is in.

I suggest he reads the excellent letter in the Chronicle, July 13, by Mr RF Goodall.

Any anger regarding austerity should be directed at the irresponsible Labour government of Mr Blair, who wrecked the economy and left the current government with a record budget deficit and a national debt second only to the post-Second World War level.

The voters of this country need to recognise that we all have to contribute to eradicate the deficit and eventually start to reduce our national debt.

All political parties say they do not want to saddle the next generation with our debts but their actions and policies do not back up their hollow words.

MR N PATTERSON
Halesowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Jobs need doing so get convicts to work

TWO items of news caught my attention recently. The first was the long overdue redevelopment of the old council house, and Hobbs Corner in Halesowen, though it was a pity public opinion was ignored again, and in my view an opportunity missed to develop something more imaginative, such as quality shops, books, stationary, music, etc.

The other item was the appalling and distressing state of our graveyards, and the proposal to save a 'paltry' £15,000 by tending to them twice a year. So much for the respect we afford our dead?

One would have thought there was plenty of labour available from our over-crowded prisons, and other offenders, which would perhaps provide a sort of rehabilitation towards society.

RICHARD WESTWOOD
Halesowen

Trouble to believe the train talks

ALL our transport bosses are united in their grossly over-optimistic, ever shriller blandishments that freight, commuter trains, regional and national trains can all operate efficiently and safely on the same one set of double tracks, with an odd third track where there is the occasional room.

This has frequent stopping, every six minutes, 'bus on rails' trams using the double tracks first. All this with cuttings, embankments, bridges and tunnels that cannot be widened in a heavily built up Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and, then, onto more rural Staffordshire.

Staffordshire has their £5 million double track railway bridge built only for ghost trains as it soars over the M6 Toll, would you believe!

Why do I have trouble believing this wonderful reassurance? Of course, it will be all right on the night, you doubting Tim!

TIM WELLER
Halesowen

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

Museum win the battle to save historic gas building

THE Black Country Living Museum has won a battle to save a former historic gas showroom despite council chiefs dismissing plans as 'pie in the sky' earlier this year.

The building – currently in West Bromwich High Street – will be relocated to the museum base as part of their £21 million expansion project. It was given the go-ahead to be demolished in May. Bosses at the Tipton Road site have campaigned to save the building since last year.

Universities seeing first class effort

UNIVERSITIES across the West Midlands have seen a rise in the number of students gaining first class degrees.

Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency found that the University of Wolverhampton has seen the biggest rise in figures.

In 2010/11, 10.3 per cent of students gained first class honours and that has now risen 13.8 per cent in 2015/16, with 24 per cent of students making the grade.

Birmingham City University saw 16.7 per cent bag a first in 2010/11 and 24.3 per cent in 2015/16 – a rise of 7.6 per cent.

The University of Birmingham's number of first class degrees spiked by 12.1 per cent, from 17.7 per cent in 10/11 to 29.8 per cent in 2015/16.

Across the UK the proportion of first class degrees has soared.

They say they will now pay additional costs to make sure it is taken down brick-by-brick.

It contradicts claims made by council members in recent months that the museum did not have a 'credible proposal' for the 'pie in the sky' relocation of the 1940s building.

Demolishing

Councillor Paul Moore, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "I am very pleased to get confirmation from the museum they are prepared to pay the additional costs of demolishing the building in order to relocate the sections they want to save."

"The extra costs come from the need to remove the parts of the building the museum require brick-by-brick rather than just the usual demolition process."

"The Council looks forward to continuing to work with the museum on this project and their future plans," Councillor Moore added.

Jonathan Wilson, deputy chief executive of collections, learning and research at the museum, said: "The gas showroom is one of the key buildings we have identified to create at the museum as part of BCLM: Forging Ahead, since it gives us the opportunity to tell a range of real Black Country lives and stories of social and domestic life from the 1940s-60s."

Major rescue undertaken for hefty hound



Major the Bullmastiff stuck at the bottom of the bank

IT was a ruff day for this hefty hound after he became stranded 100ft down a steep river bank.

And it proved tricky for firefighters to collar the canine who weighed in at a staggering 13st 3lbs – or 85kgs.

Major the Bullmastiff was out with his owner when he managed to get stuck by the River Stour, in Butchers Lane, on the border of Cradley and Cradley Heath.

The huge dog was reached by crews



The rescue under way

Picture: Haden Cross fire station

from Haden Cross fire station after being alerted through a 999 call at around 7.30pm last Tuesday. The fire service's technical rescue team based at Wednesbury fire station were also called to help.

His owner ensured Major was relaxed and he was laid on a blanket.

It was a tricky location for the rescue with the running water from the river coupled with the muddy bank. Firefighters then managed to get the

pooch to lie down on a stretcher and strapped up tight.

Crews created a pulley system to allow him to be brought up the side of the steep bank.

Crew members from the technical rescue team also tweeted: "Full rope rescue job to get poor old Major, the 85kg up a 100ft bank. Good effort with @hadencrossfire."

It took crews around an hour-and-a-half to complete the rescue.

AA sacks chief amid worries over earnings

ROADSIDE recovery firm the AA has sacked executive chairman Bob Mackenzie for gross misconduct as it warned over full-year results.

The group – which has a large West Midlands base close to Junction 2 of the M5 at Oldbury – said Mr Mackenzie had been 'removed' by the board with immediate effect.

A spokesman said it was a 'personal conduct-related matter', but declined to give more information.

Mr Mackenzie has been replaced by non-executive chairman John Leach, who has been senior independent director at the AA since November 2014, while it has also named Expedia founder Simon Breakwell as acting chief executive.

The group made the shock announcement as it also said first-half performance has been hit by 'erratic workload patterns', as it failed to adequately boost roadside patrols to match demand.

Shares plunged as much as 18 per cent as it said it now expects its annual performance to be flat on the year before.

Analysts at Liberum slashed their full-year earnings forecast for the AA by three per cent from £414 million to £413m after the results warning.

The AA had already begun plans to split the executive chairman role.

Nurses shortage at Russells Hall

BOSSSES at the trust which runs Russells Hall Hospital say they are struggling to recruit nurses.

A plan has been drawn up to try and tackle the issue, which has resulted in the Dudley Group NHS Trust paying more for agency staff.

Health chiefs have now said they will approach graduates.

ADVERTISEMENT

Former midwife's smile reborn

'I'd grown tired of living my life around my teeth'

Former Dudley community midwife Vicki Ball, left, is full of smiles after getting new teeth and an implant solution to a long-standing stabilisation problem. 'I love my new teeth,' she says

have done more to save her own teeth.

"For the last 18 months I've put up with ill-fitting and badly made dentures. My gums were always sore and the bottom denture was unstable.

Researching options

"My top teeth I could secure with a fixative, but for the bottom it was a waste of time – as soon as I had anything to eat the stability was over," says Vicki.

Her diet became restricted, avoiding beef and crispy fruits like apples.

Frustrated by the appearance and function of her teeth – they seemed to be set too far back, Vicki says – she started researching her options.

"I'd grown tired of living my whole life

around my teeth. I never really stopped going out, but when I did, I was always thinking ahead where I could go to take my teeth out. They were just so uncomfortable." A self-confessed lover of travel overseas – "it's my hobby" – Vicki saw an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) and his work at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

features. "From start to finish it took 14 weeks, but it was worth the wait. When I first saw my teeth in the mirror, I thought they looked just like real teeth and . . . they feel like my own teeth.

Such a relief

"My husband, Terry, couldn't believe they were so good. Not to have to keep thinking about my teeth when I'm out is such a relief," she says.

Steven says: "Mrs Ball needed dentures that would offer proper support to her facial features.

"These days the term 'facelift' dentures is banded about. The claim is spurious, but with the correct setting of teeth, the effect is to lift the facial structures in the same way natural healthy gums and teeth support tissues and muscles. I'm very please to have been part of giving a new birth the Vicki's smile."



North Street's dental implant surgeon, Dr Owain Rees (left) BDS, DGD (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576 with principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353

"I'd seen a piece about suction dentures and implant retained dentures and there seemed to be a solution for me," she says.

After seeing Steven and implant surgeon Dr Owain Rees BDS, DGD (UK) DIP IMP DENT (UCL), Vicki's treatment included two implants to stabilise a lower over denture and the prescribing of high quality traditional upper dentures to help support her facial

Predictably reassuring

MEETING Vicki Ball is all about the smiles – lots of them. She's generous with her compliments, can't wait for her next holiday adventure and has the most infectious of laughs.

Her company is light and she's gushing with the praise about her new look.

A retired community midwife who was based at the former Wordsley Hospital, the bubbly 60-something-year-old is quick to affirm: "I love my new teeth and they look natural, don't they?"

Adding: "You can't tell they're not my own," Vicki admits her smile has not always been

her favourite attribute. "I've always had trouble with my teeth; even as a young girl they crumbled and my gums used to bleed. Even though I was diligent about looking after them, they still let me down," she adds.

Two years ago, Vicki finally lost her remaining teeth. "I really don't know why my teeth were so bad, but I was the youngest of eight children and I understand my mother's priorities did not include teaching me how to brush my teeth. She had more pressing priorities of how she was going to put food on the table," Vicki recalls.

A teenager by the time she had her first tooth brush, she is convinced she couldn't



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Town fair is no fun at all for business owner

THE owner of a furniture shop is protesting over a funfair held outside his business – which he claims will hit sales.

Andrew Hill, who runs Discount Suites and Beds in Oakleywell Street, Dudley, says the fair on a council car park will hit his business by 90 per cent.

He says the amount of customers he gets drops. But council leaders have hit back at Mr Hill's claims, which they say are 'unjustified'. Mr Hill said: "Dudley Council has allowed the fun fair to go ahead on the car park directly in front of my shop."

Weeks

"The funfair normally runs for two weeks and in that time my sales are affected around 80 to 90 per cent. The fair has been held for the last two years and I have been protesting against it, but Dudley Council doesn't seem to care."

His shop is next to Flood Street car park, near to Cousins, which is where the funfair is held.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, the Labour spokesman for planning and economic development at Dudley Council said: "I think we had this issue last year. I don't think it is justifiable. The funfair does not block off his store. The funfair attracts more people to the town centre, where they can also go and shop."

Dudley Council owns the land and allows businesses and companies to use it by paying a fee. Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We were made aware of Mr Hill's feelings and asked him to write to us. Unfortunately, we never heard from him."



Andrew Hill, in the car park outside Discount Suites and Beds in Dudley

Free festival of country

A POPULAR music festival returns to a town this month.

Riverside Meadows, in Stourport, will host the free Country and Western Festival on August 19 and 20.

Acts performing on Saturday include Amy Morgan, Tom Collins, Donna Wyld and Twin Falls.

On Sunday there will be performances from Chris James, Kezia Gill and Texas Tornados.

A DJ will also play at the event, while other entertainment includes a

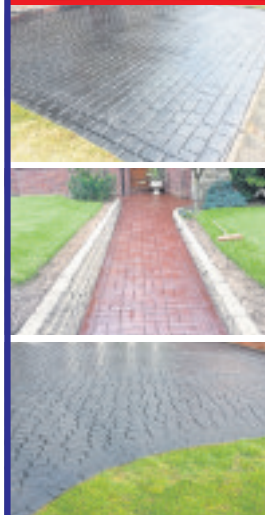
fast draw shoot-out, face painting and children's rides.

There will also be refreshments, trade stalls and a licensed bar available for revellers.

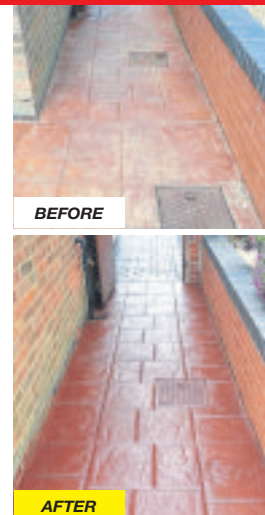
Camping pitches are available from £15 per night on the Riverside Meadows. They are available from 2pm on August 18 until 10am on August 20.

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'Super council' boss will earn £187k – £7k more than advert

THE new chief executive of the West Midlands 'super council' will be paid £187,500 a year – £7,500 more than the advertised salary.

Deborah Cadman is chief executive of Suffolk County Council. She will take up the role at the West Midlands Combined Authority later in the year. The role was advertised with a salary of between £160,000 and £180,000. The 54-year-old is due to take in September.

Authority has new director for finances

The West Midlands Combined Authority has announced its latest key appointment to its executive top tier.

Sean Pearce was named as director of finance, joining a team led by £187,000-a-year chief executive Deborah Cadman.

Mr Pearce was chief financial officer at Worcestershire County Council for six years, working on the delivery of major transformation and change programmes during a period of swinging budget cuts.

He will work closely with West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and the chief executive to drive forward initiatives including the delivery of a capital investment programme of at least £8 billion as part of the devolution deal.

Mr Pearce said he was looking forward to building on 'solid foundations' laid by predecessor Mark Taylor.

Her previous role in Suffolk came with a £170,000-a-year salary. It is £108,500 more than the first elected West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, who is paid £79,000.

The West Midlands Combined Authority is a combined authority which brings together the four Black Country councils, Birmingham, Solihull, and Coventry to oversee issues like transport and infrastructure.

Powers

It will be given £1.1 billion over the next 30 years – or £36.5 million a year. Discussions have just started over obtaining more powers and funding from the government.

Mrs Cadman, from Birmingham, will replace interim chief executive Martin Reeves, who will return to his post at Coventry City Council. Pete Durnell, UKIP mayoral candidate, said of the revelation: "I am slightly surprised that Mrs Cadman has been given a £7,500 pay rise before even starting."

"At the rate it is going it will barely pay the salaries of the staff."

A combined authority spokesman said: "A degree of flexibility will always be required when trying to secure the strongest candidate."

"Details of relocation and annual leave remain private."

Sir Lenny tells graduates to 'be proud'



Sir Lenny Henry presides over his first graduation ceremony as Chancellor of Birmingham City University

SIR Lenny Henry encouraged students to 'seize opportunities' as he presided over his first graduation ceremony as Chancellor of Birmingham City University.

Wearing ceremonial robes, the Dudley-born actor, writer, comedian and charity campaigner addressed more than 1,000 graduates from the faculty of arts, design and media at a ceremony in Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

Sir Lenny told them: "We live in

uncertain political times but in moments of great change, there are always opportunities. I hope the skills, capabilities and knowledge with which you are all now equipped will enable you to seize on these opportunities; to create new jobs, new types of jobs and to build a new future for all of us. This really is your time – so go ahead and change it."

During his speech, Sir Lenny also added some cheeky comic touches by

making reference to student life, saying: "I know how hard you have had to work because I have been there myself – the late nights, the early mornings and three thousand episodes of Bargain Hunt."

"Each and every one of you graduating today has shown dedication and personal commitment to be here. You should be proud of what you have achieved and you should be proud of Birmingham City University."

Animal Agents needed for top secret mission

YOUNGSTERS across Dudley have the chance to mix reading and nature this summer as part of the Animal Agents theme.

Part of the summer reading challenge, a number of libraries across the borough carry the option for kids to meet animals from Dudley Zoo, as well as all sorts of craft events.

The tour will go right across Dudley throughout the month of August, stopping by at the library in Halesowen on its way.

Some of the zoo's creatures will visit Gornal Library on Thursday, August 10, while there is also a radio gadget-making session on Thursday, August 31 from 2.30pm until 3.30pm.

They will also visit Coseley, from 11am until 12 noon, on Thursday, August 31.

Sport is also on the bill, with a free-style footballing session at Dudley Library on Wednesday, August 16 from 10am until 11am.

Special agents of the future can hone their talents at Brierley Hill Library. A radio gadget-making session is available on Thursday, August 15 for ages seven-plus, while there is also a chance to create a special agent kit on Tuesday, August 22.

For a full schedule, visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/libraries-archives/libraries/reading-and-writing/events/

Children's writer is visiting library

THE public will be able to meet a children's author at a Black Country library.

The event, called No Need to Shout, will see Dwarnay Mills attend Oldbury Library on August 19 from 11am to noon.

Dwarnay is also known as a singer songwriter and film producer.

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School is finally out for retiring teachers

SCHOOL'S out for summer – and not just for pupils. Several teachers have retired too.

The headteacher of Springfield Primary School in Dudley Road, Rowley Regis – Sue Powis – is one of those leaving their posts and has retired after celebrating her last days with pupils.

At Amblecote Primary School teacher Max Keen, who taught more than 1,400 children during a career lasting 39 years, is one of the long-serving teachers to retire.

Mr Keen, from Stourport, started at Amblecote Primary School in 1978.

Generations

The 62-year-old has seen generations of children come and go over the years – with some even returning with children of their own.

"I am grateful for working at such a great school," he said. "The changes have been massive. It's now about data, percentage levels and league tables. But the school and kids have been great."

It will be far from a quiet retirement for Mr Keen, who gives historical talks and plays in a Beatles tribute band – The Magical History Tour.

He was even serenaded with Beatles tunes by his colleagues during his send-off.

Stourbridge's Brook Primary School saw both headteacher Lynn Cartwright and deputy head Elaine Bloomfield ring the bell on their careers.

In the school newsletter, the duo were thanked for their 'countless hours, blood, sweat, tears and relentless commitment' given for the children. It read: "They have been the motivating factors behind our many successes here."



Max Keen retires after 39 years



Head Sue Powis with well-wishers



Head Lynn Cartwright, right, and Elaine Bloomfield get a guard of honour

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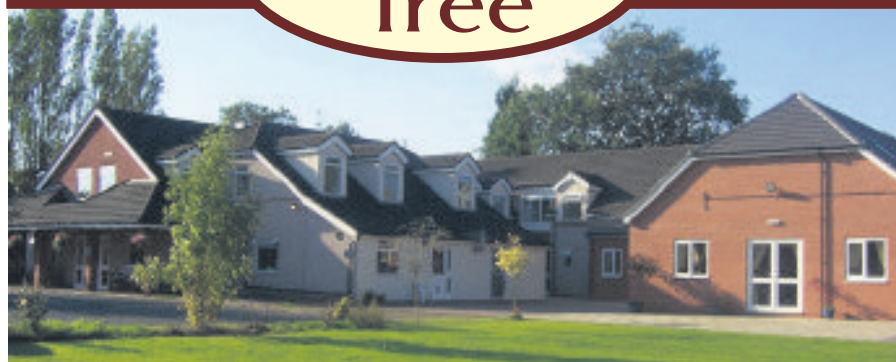
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Passengers give thumbs up to redeveloped train station

PASSENGERS using the redeveloped Birmingham New Street are happier than ever with their station experience, according to the latest National Rail Passenger Survey.

Between March and May 2017, 93 per cent of passengers who used the station were satisfied with their station experience – a rise from 66 per cent in spring 2015 before the £750 million new station opened. The latest figures put the site at a record third place in the national rankings of customer satisfaction.

Just snap to it and enter competition

YOUNG people are being urged to get snapping during the school holidays and enter their photos into the RSPCA's Young Photographer Awards.

Entries can depict a bug, a bird or a big, beautiful mammal, as photos of any kinds of wildlife and animals are welcome.

For the first time there will be a prize given for the best photograph taken on a mobile phone. BBC Springwatch presenter Chris Packham will once again be part of the judging panel.

He said: "If you're under 19, why not head out into the countryside and snap some wildlife? Or you could get a great shot of your pet, whether it's your dog, cat or even your hamster."

The deadline for entries is 4pm on August 18. Go to www.rspca.org.uk/ypa/17

The results reflect the investment to transform it into a world class transport hub and are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the station teams.

Patrick Power, Network Rail station manager, said: "It is really satisfying to see that passengers continue to enjoy their experience at the redeveloped Birmingham New Street and that we have been able to build on the previous rise we saw after the station reopened in 2015.

Better

"It is really encouraging for me and my staff to see how passengers are enjoying and adapting to the new facilities. However, there is always room for continued improvement and we will continue to strive to provide an even better service to passengers."

The survey, carried out by independent watchdog Transport Focus, asked around 30,000 passengers nationally for their views on the railway.

Birmingham New Street's renovation saw it transform from a dated and dark station to one of the best and brightest in Britain. The investment was a key part of Network Rail's Railway Upgrade Plan and the facility boasts a concourse five times the size of the original station with an abundance of shops and facilities.

Food smoking as Hickory's rises from ashes



Managers and staff at Hickory's celebrate the reopening of the site and thanked the public for their support

LESS than a year after being hit by a devastating fire a popular restaurant is now back in business – and with a new look inside and out.

Customers have returned to the rebuilt Hickory's Smokehouse, in Kidderminster Road, Wall Heath, with bosses saying they have been overwhelmed by local support.

The interior resembles a wild west bar, with wooden decking, balconies and old-fashioned barrels making up

the decor. Bosses say they have enjoyed a great start and have thanked the public for all the support shown in helping them to get up and running again. General manager Adam Thompson said: "We have had a cracking start. We have been overwhelmed by the support that has been shown."

"The interior looks fabulous. We started with a blank canvas to work with. With the design, we have made a nod to the Kingfisher (a pub which

was on the site before)." The exterior has been painted in a cream and dark green colour. The roof is thatched, adding to the old-fashioned theme the designers had envisioned.

The restaurant was virtually destroyed in the blaze last August. Bosses have described it as being like 'a real phoenix rising from the ashes'. Paula Brown, community manager for the venue, said: "We just want to welcome everyone back."

Hospice quick to quash talk of site move

BOSSSES at Mary Stevens Hospice have assured families they are not closing after concerns were raised about its future at Oldswinford.

The hospice, which provides end-of-life care, says it had been contacted by several people concerned it could be closing after it was announced Age Concern would be leaving the neighbouring Mary Stevens Centre due to funding difficulties.

Far from being in danger of closing, a £3 million refurbishment is gathering pace at the Hagley Road site.

Hospice spokesman Dan Malin said: "We're so grateful for the concern that has been shown by our community, and we really are keen to reassure our supporters that – while we are highly sympathetic of the situation which has forced Age Concern to relocate – those difficulties do not extend to the hospice in any way."

"As the £3m redevelopment begins, we are entering a pivotal chapter in the history of this charity, and we will continue to strive to help more and more families."

"We are well-managed, well-supported and our care is helping more and more families."

Chief executive Stevan Jackson said the hospice would be moving into a temporary day unit in the car park as work on the revamp steps up a gear.

Six lucky people enjoy lottery win

SIX neighbours in a village near Halesowen have landed a People's Postcode Lottery daily prize.

Residents in Farley Lane, Romsley, scooped £1,000 each thanks to their postcode B62 0LN.

People's Postcode Lottery is a subscription lottery, where players sign up to pay monthly in advance.

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Learn about animals housed in town's zoo

VISITORS to Dudley Zoo can learn all about lynx, lemurs and gibbons in a summer season of talks.

The attraction has launched its daily holiday schedule, with informative talks and feeds running throughout the day between 11.30am and 3.30pm.

For the first time, staff have included a lynx talk in the packed programme, allowing visitors to learn all about out three Carpathian lynx – Daisy, Dave and Dakota – and a lemur talk about the cheeky Madagascan prosimians on top of that.

The lynx talk will take place at 1pm at their enclosure – opposite the giraffe paddock, while the lemur talk will run at 2.30pm in Lemur Wood.

Keepers are also putting their lar gibbon family back in the spotlight at midday each day, as they re-introduce their talk for the holidays at their enclosure adjacent to the sea lion pool.

There is also the usual tiger talk at 1.15pm, the sea lion talk and feed at 2.45pm, the penguin talk and feed at 3pm, the meerkat talk and feed at 3.15pm, and the chance to meet a chimp keeper at 3.15pm.

For the full programme of all summer events see www.dudleyzoo.org.uk

Ace idea as charity serves up free tennis



Chief executive Paul Jessop, left, with James Perrin

WIMBLEDON may be over, but one charity is determined to make sure the sport is seen as more than just a two-week fad.

Tennis for Free, founded back in 2003, is keen to promote the game as an all-year round sport and to get more people playing.

They are looking to expand into Dudley and Stourbridge having already run successful schemes in Hednesford, Lichfield and Sandwell.

Run by the Perrin brothers, James and Chris, from Cheslyn Hay Tennis Club, the pair put on a number of exercises to help people improve their game, as well as having the opportunity to just hit the ball and have fun.

Chief executive Paul Jessop, who joined in 2006, said: "The sport is great psychologically, socially and physically so schemes like this to get people doing a bit of healthy exercise is very beneficial."

Founded by comedian Tony Hawks and fashion executive Patrick Hollwey, Tennis for Free is expected to grow in the coming years. Visit www.tennisforfree.com for more.

Chiltern Rail rated top train company

PASSENGERS have rated Chiltern Railways as the UK's top franchise for punctuality and reliability.

The company received a score of 92 per cent in Transport Focus' National Rail Passenger Survey.

Operator Chiltern, an Arriva UK Trains company, also scored top of the Department for Transport (DfT) franchises for satisfaction with punctuality and reliability, satisfaction with how requests to station staff were handled and satisfaction with car parking facilities.

The National Rail Passenger Survey which is commissioned by the independent consumer watchdog Transport Focus, represents the views of more than 100,000 rail passengers on a broad spectrum of issues such as overall satisfaction.

Dave Penney, Chiltern Railways managing director, said: "We are delighted that passengers have rated Chiltern as the UK's top DfT franchise for overall satisfaction."

Man stole 18 televisions from his work to sell on

A MAN who stole 18 televisions he claimed were 'ready to be scrapped' sold them for more than £7,000 less than their value, a court heard.

Jonathan Hall, 38, of Smiths Place, Great Bridge, worked at Dreams PLC in Wednesbury when he took the televisions.

Hall pleaded guilty to one count of

theft by employee between March and July 2016 at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court on July 4 and last week was sentenced for the theft of television sets worth £9,000, which he sold to Cash Converters for £1,500.

The court heard Hall believed the TVs were to be thrown away and claimed he had asked a supervisor, but prosecutor Mrs Val Hart said the company denied this. Hall was also charged with assault in relation to an

altercation with his ex-partner and criminal damage to a letter box.

He pleaded guilty and was given a 12-month community order, including 20-day rehabilitation and 120 hours' unpaid work. He was ordered by Judge Michael Wheeler to pay an £85 surcharge, £185 costs, £100 compensation to his ex partner and £1,000 compensation to Dreams PLC. He received a restraining order preventing him contacting his ex for 12 months.

Yobs seen throwing bricks from bridge

YOBS were spotted throwing bricks at cars from a bridge over a main road.

Police were called to Duncan Edwards Way, also known as the Dudley Southern Bypass, in Dudley at 7.30pm last Wednesday, but a spokesman said police were not able to find those responsible.

A spokesman for the force said: "We were called about bricks being thrown from Duncan Edwards Way, Dudley, at around 7.30pm. Officers attended and there was no trace of anyone."

The incident has been condemned by a ward councillor, who said it could have caused serious injury.

Councillor Shaikat Ali said: "This is an unacceptable type of behaviour which puts at risk the lives of people."

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Life expectancy nothing more than a simple postcode lottery

LONG-TERM unemployment, rates of diabetes, proportions of obese children and life expectancy; when it comes to your health in the West Midlands and Staffordshire, it is a lottery depending on where you live.

Live in Dudley and you are likely to be among the 53.5 per cent of people who are physically inactive.

Reside in Wolverhampton and Sandwell and you are twice as likely as to be unemployed long-term than those in Staffordshire.

Empty office block put up for £25k rent

A FORMER office block in Oldbury town centre has been put up for let in the search for a new tenant.

The three-storey listed Victorian building in Church Square has stood vacant in recent months, but in a bid to give it a new lease of life it is now up for let for £25,000 a year.

The property has office space, a vestibule, reception hall through to a waiting room and a secure office with counter.

There is also a rear office, staff room and canteen.

The first floor has five separate offices and the second floor has four, with a car park to the rear making it easily accessible for town centre workers.

It is on the market with estate agent Samuel & Co where enquiries should be made.

While if you live in Walsall, you are more likely to have diabetes than anywhere else in Black Country. The information comes from health profiles for each area published by Public Health England. They show an inequality in health depending where people live. To tackle this, Public Health England has come up with local priorities for each area.

Ranged

In Dudley, where life expectancy for men ranged almost 10 years across the borough, seven years for women, the council has been tasked with encouraging a healthy weight for residents and reducing the impact of poverty. Dudley Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "There are some positives in the report and some areas to work on."

"There are a number of areas we are already focussed on including improving health in pregnancy, encouraging healthy weight in children and have initiatives in place such as the Daily Mile in schools and partnership working to encourage breast feeding."

The picture is better in Staffordshire where long-term unemployment is below the national average, as is children in low income families.

Hallelujah – church is back on song



At St John's Church, Dudley, Deb Brownlee appeals to keep funding coming in, stood at the blue Chancel screen

WHEN an historic church was re-opened after 14 years following a community campaign, that was just the beginning.

Thousands of pounds have been spent over the last year at St John's Church in Kates Hill, Dudley, as officials continue to bring it back to its former glory.

The St John's Preservation Group fought a long battle to gain control of the church, which had fallen into dis-

repair after more than a decade lying empty. It was closed in 2002 as it was deemed to be unsafe.

They were handed the keys last year and have been busy since bringing the building back up to scratch.

A special event was held to mark both its 177th anniversary and a year since it was re-opened. Group members also used the occasion to appeal for more donations. Insurance for the next year will cost almost £10,000

alone. Chairman of the group Deb Brownlee said: "Now the building is almost completely waterproof, there is daylight streaming through the windows, the building has been deep cleaned and is drying out well."

"We really need a good supply of funds to be able to carry on work at this pace, and regular giving means we can plan accordingly."

Visitors have been streaming into the church since its re-opening.

Taxi drivers hopeful to get CCTV backed

TAXI drivers remain hopeful they will be able to fit CCTV in their cars – a move they insist is needed to put a stop to violence against cabbies.

Council bosses in Dudley have been asked to consider allowing drivers to put cameras in Hackney carriages and private vehicles due to concerns over their safety after a spell of attacks in the borough. Dudley Taxi Association bosses said discussions with council officers had been positive and expect to get the green light. A formal decision would have to be made by the taxis committee.

Association chairman Shaz Saleem said there had been nine attacks on drivers in Dudley this year and he believes they will continue to be in danger without cameras, which they hope will deter robbers and other thugs.

He said taxis were seen as 'money on wheels' and it was vital drivers were given better protection.

Mr Saleem said: "We are pleased with talks which have been going on. It shows they are supporting us."

"It is not just drivers but our customers as well," he added.

"We need that security for everyone. It is a must and will help the police. It will go a long way to stopping serious attacks. Last year there was one incident, this year there have been nine."

Disney character Belle dropping by

A DISNEY-THEMED activity session is taking place at Rounds Green Library in Oldbury.

Disney fans will be able to meet Disney Princess Belle – from smash hit Beauty and the Beast – will be dropping by to meet Disney fans at the library on August 21, from 11am to noon.

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Everything must go in big refurbishment

Family company Dreamworld was formed back in 1982, with the original shop in Windmill Bank, Wombourne, in what was previously the village launderette.

Owner Roger Manley was then working as a merchant banker based in Birmingham, and after the couple's children started school he and his wife Allie thought they should start a business.

"We weren't absolutely sure what type of business to open to start with," admits Roger. "But we knew that Wombourne was a thriving village which was expanding rapidly and after studying the businesses that already existed we felt that there was a gap in the market for a furniture and bedding outlet."

Strength

It turned out to be a good decision and during the next five years the business went from strength to strength with more family members joining the expanding team including Roger's brother John, sister Mavis and his two sisters-in-law.

In 1987, due to increasing demand, whilst retaining the original Wombourne shop the family opened a second outlet in Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, with approximately 10 times the floor space.

Everything seemed to be progressing well, with a further five years successful trading, until tragedy struck when a fire completely gutted the Kingswinford store.

"The fire started on a Sunday morning whilst John and I were in the shop," explains Roger.

"It was a major setback and we were very low at the time but with the help of our suppliers, friends and family it turned into a true phoenix from the ashes story.

"Remarkably within just one week we were



The latest chapter in Dreamworld's progress is the expansion and refurbishment of the store. The current sale features great savings across the whole range.

trading again moving into what was then vacant premises further down Stallings Lane where we have traded successfully for 34 years building an enviable reputation for value-for-money, quality and service."

It is the company's proud boast that approximately 70 per cent of their business comes via recommendation of previous customers.

"This is obviously the best type of business you can get and is an endorsement of the level of service and satisfaction that customers have enjoyed from us," says Roger.

"We often get generations of families come

to us whose parents and grandparents have bought items from us and we are now dealing with the latest generation, it's very satisfying."

A lot of the furniture Dreamworld sell is bespoke with settees made in any choice of size and style finished in fabric or leather.

The vast majority of the chairs can be ordered as recliners including 'rise and recliners'.

"This is becoming an increasingly high proportion of our business for those customers who have difficulty getting up and down into their chairs," adds Roger.

"Beds can also be custom made to any size and be electrically operated to assist

with getting in and out of bed which is a real problem for a lot of people. For our customers' peace of mind all our suites and beds carry a ten-year guarantee, unless otherwise stated, and it has been our policy from day one to offer free delivery and removal of your old furniture.

"As the old saying goes," says Roger, "you can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time and any company that operates on that basis without looking after customers is not going to last and certainly won't enjoy the longevity that Dreamworld has.

"We are very proud of our record for customer satisfaction which has always been at the top of our agenda."

The latest chapter in Dreamworld's progress is the expansion and refurbishment of the store. This coincided with the opening of the new Lidl superstore in Stallings Lane which Roger predicted would bring a higher volume of traffic and footfall past the showrooms.

The current sale features great savings across the whole range, so now is the time to pay Dreamworld a visit for unbelievable savings on furniture.



Everything must go in big refurbishment

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Nine mistakes you are making with sunscreen



How, when and where you apply sun cream can make a huge difference to its effectiveness. Learn how to sunbathe safely with these tips. Sun cream. Grab a bottle of factor 15 from Boots at the airport, whack it on when you hit your sun lounger and you're all set.

Right?
Wrong.

"Applying sunscreen seems simple enough, but if you're not careful, improper use can leave your skin vulnerable and exposed," warns Daniel Isaacs, formulation and development director at Medik8.

A survey by the British Association of Dermatologists in 2016 identified that 80 per cent of people are failing to adequately apply sunscreen.

Even the most cautious sun worshippers may be putting themselves at risk with their suntan-lotion technique, but armed with the right knowledge you can ensure you're thoroughly protected...

1. Applying sunscreen in the sun

"Any application in direct sunlight increases evaporation by up to 60 per cent, reducing protection," says Abi Cleeve, MD Ultrasun UK. "Put it on at least 15 minutes before you go out. Get a good coverage and let it sink in."

2. Ditching the SPF on cloudy days

"Even when it's not particularly sunny, sunscreen is still required," says Seena Seka, sun care specialist for Linco Care Ltd. "When the sky is overcast, UV radiation levels are still at 80 per cent of their normal levels."

3. Checking the weather forecast not the UV index

"The temperature can be deceptive – a breeze can keep you cool, but it doesn't affect UV levels. Look up the UV index for your area to make sure you're using protection when necessary, especially between 11am and 3pm, when the sunshine is at its strongest," Seena advises.

4. Missing sensitive spots

"The most common site for men to develop a malignant

melanoma is on the chest or back. For women it's more likely on the legs," Abi says. So slather on liberally all over.

5. Skipping your lips

"Lips are often forgotten and with no natural shade like the lower lip, the upper lip area in particular shows ageing from sun damage more quickly. Help prevent damage from the elements with the Ultrasun Ultralip SPF 30 [£6, M&S]," Abi recommends.

6. Not topping up enough

"Consumers should also be mindful of the activities they perform whilst wearing sunscreen. Sweat, exposure to water, towel drying and anything that rubs against the skin can significantly diminish your level of protection," Daniel says. "To receive a sunscreen's full protective properties, you should be topping up your application every two hours."

7. Not checking the expiration date

An Asda survey revealed that 57 per cent of Brits are

wearing out-of-date sunscreen. "Check your product for shelf life, the average is just 6-12 months," Abi says.

8. Not slapping on enough product

"It is recommended that a minimum quantity of 35ml is sufficient for all-over body protection. If you reduce the required amount, then the level of SPF protection will decrease significantly," Seena warns. That's about two tablespoons. "As a rule, you should always use an SPF15 product or higher at the start of sun exposure. You can always choose a lower factor later," he adds.

9. Only using SPF on holiday

"There is a common misconception that sunscreen is only necessary in the summer months, or worse still, just for the beach or pool," Daniel warns. "The truth is UV rays are everywhere, and whether you're enjoying a summer stroll or taking refuge from winter winds near a brightly lit window, you're still being exposed to damage. Daily, year-round application is essential if you wish to shield skin from photodamage."

10 ways to stop hair colour fading on holiday

While there's a lot to love about summer holidays – like lie-ins, lazy beach days and spamming your friends with envy-inducing Instagram posts – there's one downside: Even the brightest of hair colours can be ravaged by all that sun, sea and sand.

"When we think of the sun damaging coloured hair, we immediately think of the effect on blonde hair, but in reality all colours are prone to fade and this can be disastrous for redheads and brunettes too," says Maria Kovacs, Tigi European session director.

So what do you do – just whack on a heat-protection spray and hope for the best? Actually, there's a lot more you can do to keep your colour looking vibrant and your locks healthy, starting before you jet off.

Here are the experts' top tips for fighting the fade...

1. Don't dye before you fly

"Have your hair coloured eight to 15 days before departure on holiday," says hair colourist Christophe Robin. "Or else opt for a very minimal 'tie and dye', or highlights on just a few strands around your face."

2. Choose your colour carefully

"Excessive colour fade comes from damaged hair," advises Sophia Hilton, founder of Not Another Salon.

"Prevention is better than cure. We use INNOluxe in all our colours, to protect at the same time to stop this.

"My advice is to make sure your colourist is using something to protect your hair."

3. Don't wash your hair every day

"If you can avoid daily washing, it is preferable for coloured hair. Just get used to spritzing with dry shampoo on no-wash days and you'll see a difference," says Kerrie O'Reilly, TIGI Academy technical director.

4. Wetter hair is better

"Hair is like a sponge, so if you don't have any swim protection cream, just drench it with fresh water from the shower or even a bottle before you go in the sea or pool," recommends Paul Dennison, hair colourist at Ken Picton Salon. "The water effectively fills the gaps in the keratin, so the salt or chlorinated water can't get in as much."

5. Rinse with cool water

Celebrity Hairstylist Phil Smith says: "I always advise clients to avoid rinsing hair with hot water; instead opt for cold water as this helps to preserve the hair dye. Washing with hot water opens the pores and allows the dye to escape."

6. Be gentle when towel-drying

"Towel-drying your hair is yet another way to make colour fade fast," Smith warns. "It will scrape colour out of the cuticle layer of hair that could already be open from your shower. Try gently blotting the hair and let it air-dry as much as you can." Or, try the AQUIS Lisse Luxe Hair Towel, £30 (aquishair.co.uk), which is made from a special, extra-soft textile that isn't as harsh on hair.

7. Make your own hair sunscreen

"Hair sunscreens are really important but if you're on a budget, add a teaspoon of

factor 50 to a small spritz bottle and mix with hot water, then spray in," says Jack Howard, colourist at Paul Edmonds.

8. Ditch the heat stylers

"When we use heat on our hair again and again, it begins to damage the outer layer of the hair, meaning colour molecules can escape faster," says Esther Couchman, salon specialist & technical educator. "Ditch your straighteners and tongs over the summer months and opt to let your hair dry naturally."

9. Invest in high-quality shampoo and conditioner

"Aim to keep your colour fresh by using a professional shampoo or conditioner. High street brands may be cheaper but they are often not powerful enough to maintain colour to a noticeable standard," say the pros at Taylor Taylor salon.

10. Use protection

"Applying a water-resistant cream that contains a UV filter will help prevent colour change when you're in the sun or swimming in the sea or pool," says Anabel Kingsley, trichologist at Philip Kingsley. "To additionally prevent colour change, wear wide-brimmed hat or sit under a beach umbrella."

● Three of the best holiday hair protectors
Sassoon Professional Halo Hydrate, £17.45 (www.regissalons.co.uk)

Philip Kingsley Swimcap Treatment, £15 (LookFantastic.com)

Tigi Beach Bound Protection Spray, currently reduced to £11.35 from £16.25 (www.escentual.com)



Glorious garden is just one 'therapeutic' escape

HIS glorious garden is his pride and joy – and also the place where pensioner Donald Hall goes to put his mind at ease.

Mr Hall and his wife Barbara have won awards for their beautiful outside space in the past. And given the array of colours in the garden, it should be no surprise to anybody.

Mr Hall says working in the garden of his Netherton home is 'therapeutic'.

The 78-year-old has twice been diagnosed with cancer and also had a heart bypass – but says he forgets about his aches and pains when he is outside.

Pristine

Mrs Hall, aged 76, is a retired florist and also helps out keeping everything in pristine condition.

The garden at their Abingdon Road home is packed with beautiful blooms including begonias, hydrangeas, geraniums, petunias, busy lizzies, chrysanthemums, sunflowers and surfinias.

Mr Hall said it is looking better than ever this year.

He said: "I think the weather conditions have really helped this year. We've had sunshine and we've had rain and I've fed them pretty well too."

"We've always had a nice garden but I think it's exceptional this year. It keeps me pretty busy and Barbara helps. She used to be a florist so that's why I like to have a nice garden – for her. It is therapeutic out there and your mind is away from everything."

Mr Hall thanked his wife for her unwavering support despite his illnesses.

Former car components inspector Mr Hall met Barbara around a decade ago at Wood Farm Golf and Country club in Essington.



Donald Hall age, 78, with his wife Barbara, 76, and his award winning garden

3,000 over-90s on the road

MORE than 3,000 people aged 90 or over still hold driving licences in the West Midlands.

Latest figures from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency show there are 2,750 men and 979 women in their 90s who hold licences locally.

And 248 people aged over 100 still hold valid licences. The West Midlands has the third highest number of over 90s with licences, behind Hampshire and Greater London.

Once motorists reach the age of 70

they have to renew their licence every three years and answer written questions about medical conditions and eyesight quality.

As senior citizens are more likely to have a range of health problems and slower reaction times, there has been plenty of heated debate on the issue of the safety of older drivers.

However, a study from Swansea University last year claimed elderly road users are no more dangerous than other drivers.

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Ryanair boss warns 'Open Skies' arrangement could be scrapped



Concerns – BA boss Willie Walsh



Jill Seymour, the Euro MP and UKIP transport spokesman claims scaremongering tactics



Transport Secretary Chris Grayling

Could Brexit ground all flights leaving the UK?

Report by Mark Andrews

IMAGINE the scene. Birmingham Airport deserted. No passengers, the check-in desks deserted, the shops shut, and the planes grounded.

Maybe the odd maintenance worker keeping things ticking over in the hope that someday flights might resume, but no prospect of that happening in the long term.

Well, according to the latest comments from Ryanair's outspoken chief executive Michael O'Leary, that could be the situation we are faced with in two years time if Britain presses ahead with plans to leave the European Union. And not just at Birmingham Airport, but at every airport across the UK.

"By September 2018 when your average British voter is sitting down to work out where he is going on his holidays in 2019, the two options he will have are to drive to Scotland or get a ferry to Ireland," Mr O'Leary told a committee of Euro MPs discussing the impact of Brexit on tourism. He said if a deal had not been reached by the autumn of next year, his company would begin pulling flights out of UK airports.

Of course, O'Leary, who over the years has called for environmentalists and travel agents to be shot and boasted about bombarding customers with sales pitches has never been one for understatement, and his critics have been quick to accuse the EU supporter of scaremongering.

Negotiate

His claim is based on the fact that Britain would need to negotiate a fresh deal with the European Union about access to airports if flights to and from the continent were to be maintained after Brexit. Furthermore, Britain would no longer be part of the international agreements about flights between the EU and countries outside the EU. In other words, unless Britain agreed to remain part of the present "Open Skies" arrangement as part of the terms of Brexit, it will need to come to a fresh agreement with every country it has flights to and from.

Of course, the same applies to most trading agreements, which is the whole reason why Brexit Secretary David Davis is now locked in talks with his EU counterpart Michel Barnier about the terms of trade once Britain leaves the union, but there is one crucial difference. If Britain, the EU, and our other main trading partners cannot come to an agreement at the end of the two-year negotiation period, most industries will be able to fall



Outspoken Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary has called for the Brexit vote to be ignored or flights from UK airports could be grounded



Ryanair flights could be pulled from all UK airports says its boss

back on the World Trade Organisation rules which ensure reasonably free movement of goods and services. However, WTO rules do not apply to the aviation industry. This, at least in theory, means that if a deal cannot be agreed, then all flights to and from the UK will have to be suspended.

Jill Seymour, the West Midlands Euro MP and UKIP transport spokesman, has dismissed his claims as "ludicrous". She accused Mr O'Leary, who had been a vocal supporter of Britain remaining in the EU, of sour grapes.

"As long as the demand exists for flights to popular holiday spots like Spain, France and Greece, they will of course continue," he says. "Mr O'Leary is merely scaremongering, and venting his frustration that he campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU – and lost."

Of course, the simple solution would be for

Britain to remain part of the EU Open Skies agreement after we leave the EU, but there is a fly in the ointment. Open Skies comes under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, which Prime Minister Theresa May has said Britain should withdraw from. It is a matter for debate whether Britain could continue as a member of the scheme without accepting to be bound by the ECJ, at least with regards to airspace.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has said the Government is committed to securing "the best possible access to European aviation markets", but warned that it would take a while to reach agreement.

"I know that the aviation industry wants certainty, and quickly," he told airline bosses. "It'll be some time yet before we can deliver that certainty. The formal negotiations have only just begun."

"It's in the interests of all countries, and all who travel between them, that we seek open, liberal arrangements for aviation," he added.

Never one to shy away from controversy, Mr O'Leary said the only answer would be for the British Government to ignore the result of the referendum.

Sensible

"The sensible outcome here is to ignore the plebiscite of 12 months ago, stay in Europe and continue to benefit from Open Skies," he said.

"We'll be taking a lot of aircraft out of the UK in the April of 2019 and reallocating them to European regional airports and they'll be seeing a lot more growth than they'll know how to handle."

"Although Heathrow, thankfully, will be empty probably for a period of months."

Willie Walsh, chief executive of International Airlines Group which owns British Airways and the Irish Aer Lingus airline, has also voiced concerns, although struck a less confrontational tone than Mr O'Leary.

He said he was confident a deal would be struck between Britain and the EU, but urged both sides involved to reach an agreement similar to the open skies set-up.

"The UK has always supported an open, liberal deregulated aviation market," said Mr Walsh.

"With policy support it ought to be relatively straightforward to agree a deal on aviation that will be ready when the UK leaves the EU," said Mr Walsh. But Mr O'Leary said that would not be possible because there was no goodwill in Europe towards Britain.

"The French and the Germans, when they have the opportunity to stick one into the British, they like nothing better," he said.

Sports shop chain sees its annual profits halved

Report by Thom Kennedy

SPORTSWEAR chain Sports Direct has seen its annual profits more than halved because of the collapse in the value of the pound after the Brexit vote.

The chain, which has three large stores in Shropshire, suffered a 58.7 per cent slide in pre-tax profits to £113.7 million in the year to April 30.

Its chief executive is Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley, who said the group had taken action to limit the impact of the pound's heavy falls against the US dollar, but warned over longer-term sterling woes. He said upgrades to shops and the strategy of partnering with other brands to mirror Selfridges' store model was proving beneficial.

"Sports Direct is on course to become the Selfridges of sport by migrating to a new generation of stores to showcase the very best products from our third party brand partners," he said. "We have invested over £300 million in property over the last year, and I am pleased to report that early indications show that trading in our new flagship stores is exceeding expectations. The devaluation of Sterling against the US dollar has led to a significant impact on earnings and profits in 2017. We have put in place hedging arrangements to minimise the short-term impact of currency volatility, but like many UK retailers we remain exposed to medium/long term currency fluctuations."

The chain has stores at Meole Brace in Shrewsbury, Wrekin Retail Park and Telford Shopping Centre in Telford, and Cross Street in Oswestry. Sports Direct, which sources many branded goods in US dollars from Asia, said it was "optimistic" for the year ahead, targeting profit growth of between five to 15 per cent despite ongoing pressure from the pound. Like-for-like retail sales – the directly comparable sales in stores which have been open for more than a year – edged 0.3 per cent higher, with total revenues up 11.7 per cent because international sales benefited from weaker pound.

Sports Direct warned after last June's EU referendum that profits would be hit because the company failed to hedge against the fall in sterling in the immediate aftermath of the vote, meaning the weak pound impacted its product-buying power.



Sports Direct

Sales up but firm is wary of the next phase

FROM washing machines to ovens, retailer AO World has issued a fresh warning over "challenging" trading, despite delivering an increase in sales.

The company, which has opened a major recycling centre in Telford which will employ about 200 people, issued a trading update alongside its annual general meeting.

Overall UK revenue growth in the three months to June 30 has increased by 2.5 per cent, AO said.

The company had warned at the time of its full-year results announcement that it expected a sharp slowdown in sales in the quarter, and the latest increase reflected that with UK website sales growth having dropped from 14.5 per cent in the year to March 31. AO appeared satisfied to have kept sales growing, however, having anticipated a slowdown in the tough trading environment and when compared with a strong performance a year ago. "AO World remains on track with its long-term strategic plan and the board expects results for the full year to fall within the range of market expectations," said company chairman Geoff Cooper.

"Customer satisfaction continues to be exceptional in all of our territories and the roll-out of further categories across the UK and Europe continues."

He added: "As reported in June, the UK trading environment remains challenging."

The major domestic appliances market – essentially white goods like washing machines – has seen a fall in volumes year-on-year, so the company said it was "pleased" with growth in its UK website sales of 6.2 per cent. It had a strong period in the first quarter of its trading year last time out as well, adding weight to the latest figures.

MP fed up with rubbish view and calls for help

THIS is the mountain of rubbish left in an industrial yard for almost a year, which prompted calls for the Government to get involved in cleaning it up.

The waste had begun to be shifted but work ground to a halt, with latest images showing little difference made to the scene which has blighted Shaw Road in Dudley.

Around 2,000 tons of waste, which includes tyres, plastic and other industrial materials, has been dumped at the Rowanok site.

Solution

It appeared the rubbish would finally be cleared last month when the Environment Agency (EA) moved in, but it said work had 'currently stopped', prompting anger from MP Ian Austin who has called for an immediate solution.

The Labour MP for Dudley North has become frustrated by the lack of progress and said the Environment Secretary Michael Gove should get involved and urged the EA to 'get a grip'.

He first demanded action in November but there has been little progress made since then. He told the Express & Star: "Businesses and I are fed up with the time it is taking to sort this out. It's been dragging on for far too long and I want Michael Gove to get the Environment Agency to get a grip and sort it out much more quickly."

EA bosses said they were working with the landowner to try and get the clear-up resumed. Environment officer Steve Rogers said: "While our investigation into the depositing of the waste at the site is ongoing, we have been working with the permit holders and landowners to secure removal."



The mountain of rubbish left in an industrial yard in Shaw Road, Dudley

Former mayor is praised

A FORMER mayor of Dudley has been praised by his successor for his fundraising efforts.

During his time in office, Mohammed Hanif raised nearly £37,000 for three charities. Representatives from Friends of Alfie Johnson, Diabetes UK Dudley group and Dudley CIL shared the funds.

Each group took away more than £12,000 for their own charities. Current mayor Councillor Dave Tyler said: "Being mayor of Dudley is a real honour and brings so many opportunities to meet people from across our wonderful borough."

"Most importantly, we are able to help raise the profile of charitable organisations and play a part in raising funds to help support their efforts."

"I hope that people will be as generous this year to help me."

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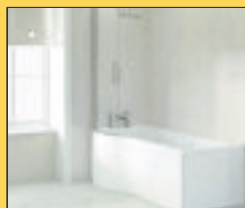


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About The Company

Trevor EW Hickton Funeral Directors are a long established firm based in Cradley Heath. Formerly known as J.E.W. Hickton & Sons the company was established in 1909 and has been serving Cradley Heath, Halesowen and all the surrounding towns and areas since. In 1909 Joe Hickton a well known carpenter, builder, undertaker, local councillor and one time Mayor of Rowley Regis, opened a dedicated funeral home located in Lower High Street, Cradley Heath to focus on the funeral directing side of business. Along with his wife Rose, the local midwife. They became a large part of the local community, with the local saying being "she brings them in to the world, and he takes them out!" Their son William 'Bill' Hickton came in to the business in 1937 and the father and son partnership began carrying out funerals across Cradley Heath and the surrounding areas, with Bill eventually taking over the business in 1957 after Joe retired. Bill's son Trevor came in to the business in 1971 working closely with his father to continue building the company reputation.

Trevor inherited J. E. W. Hickton Funeral Directors after his father Bill passed away in 2000. In 2005 the company was registered as a Limited UK company along with a name change to what it is today, Trevor E.W. Hickton Ltd Funeral Directors. Trevor's son Ross came in to the business in 2006,

followed by his other son Greg in 2010 and finally by his daughter Jodie in 2014

The family all work together along with a team of long standing and hard working staff. The office staff comprise of former Springfield Post Office manager Mandy Parsons, who looks after the on going funeral arrangements assisted by Jodie, and Kate Davis who has worked for the company for 15 years. Kate is also the company Stone Masonry manager.

In 2014 a brand new dedicated funeral home was built on the grounds of the original funeral home in Lower High Street, to support the needs of the business. Now with three private chapels of rest, three family arrangement rooms and a private working office. The company is able to cater to all needs and requirements of their clients in a friendly and inviting funeral home.

In 2015 the decision was made to renovate the funeral home in Colley Gate with a new reception area and particularly a new shop frontage.

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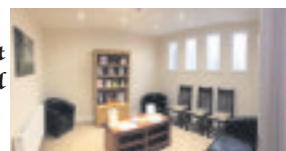
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Mike has over 30 years experience in the DIY and garden trade, including managing Texas Homecare and Sankey Homecenters stores but it was his dream to own his own hardware business, which he has now achieved.

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Formula 1 engineer Elsa Reeve, 24, talks to Megan Reece, 15

Women engineers in the driving seat

The front wing on Lewis Hamilton's Formula 1 car was designed by Elsa Reeve. Mark Andrews spoke to her about inspiring young women to be engineers.

When Elsa Reeve watches Formula 1 motor racing on television, her eyes are always glued to Lewis Hamilton.

And not because she admires his driving technique.

There is another, more important reason why the 24-year-old gets excited when Lewis tears around the track in pole position. She designed the wing on the front of his car.

"I always get excited when I see it on television," she says. "The fact that it is the wing on the front of the car means that everybody can see it."

Elsa, who is a design engineer for the Mercedes Formula 1 team, was one of the motivational speakers at a Wolverhampton University open day to encourage girls to consider careers in engineering.

During the event to mark International Women in Engineering day at the university's Telford Innovation Campus, she told how entering the traditionally male-dominated world of motor racing had opened up to her an exciting world of opportunity she could only have dreamt of as a child.

"It's incredibly exciting, and I can't imagine doing anything else," she says.

But she says her life would probably have tak-

en a very different path were it not for a conversation she overheard between a careers adviser and another pupil at her school.

"I went to see a careers adviser, and told them what I was doing. They said I should do science at university."

"But then I overheard them talking to the person behind me in the queue, he was doing exactly the same subjects, and they suggested engineering, and I thought that sounded interesting."

"I think it was just because he was a boy; it is strange to think that still goes on today."

Elsa freely admits that she knew next to nothing about motorsport when she was growing up.

"When I was at school, I didn't really know what Formula 1 was," she says.

"But when I was at university I got a chance to do a work placement at the Williams Formula 1 team, and that really spurred me on."

She excelled at maths and physics at school, but the prospect of a career as a scientist had not really gripped her imagination.

"I didn't realise I wanted to do engineering, but I knew I wanted to do something more creative."

Engineering is certainly a career with opportunities. Engineering UK estimates that Britain needs to recruit an extra 20,000 engineers every year, yet at the moment just nine per cent of them are female – the lowest percentage rate in Europe.

The university openly encourages women to apply for courses in engineering, but it still seems some are reluctant to come forward.

Marketing manager David Witton says there are approximately 400 engineering students at the university, with about a quarter of them being female.

Elsa believes this might partly be due to an outdated image that some might have of what engineering is about.

"A lot of young people when they hear about engineering, they think it is the man who comes to fix your boiler," she says. "Not that there is anything wrong with that, but it also about people working in a lot of varied and exciting careers."

Postgraduate student Navya Venkateshaiah, who came to study at Wolverhampton from Bangalore in India, says she was very surprised by how few girls were opting to study the subject when she arrived in Britain.

"In India, you would find that half of the students would be girls, so I was quite disappointed when I found I was the only one," she says.

"It's not a problem, everyone got on really well, but it is very different in India."

Navya, who says her ambition is to be an astronaut with the Indian space agency, is showing off a robot called Layla which she has built as part of her her masters degree in mechatronics.

Programmed by a computer through an electronic brain known as a Raspberry Pie, Layla has two mechanical hands which can replicate human functions.

One day, devices such as these could replace manual labour in a variety of industries, she says.

About 60 girls aged 12-17 attended the event, and they got the chance to try their hand at flying a plane and driving a racing car through simulators.

Mr Witton says while the devices might look like something out of an amusement arcade, they are actually incredibly realistic and are used by engineers to test the effect that slight changes to components might have on the performance and handling of the planes or cars.

Arabella Bayliss, 14, from Willenhall E-ACT Academy, enjoyed trying to fly a plane.

She says she is not sure whether she wants to pursue a career in engineering, but says she was encouraged by the experience. "It was much more interesting than I thought it would be," she said.

Kirsty Hayes, 13, of the Phoenix Collegiate in West Bromwich said she too had been impressed by what she had seen. "It was really interesting for me, it was more interesting than I thought it would be," she says.

Certainly, Elsa has no regrets about choosing it as a career. She has big ambitions to rise through the F1 ranks and perhaps one day take up a management role.

'I knew I wanted to do something more creative'

Time for more female acts on festival stage



Pink will be entertaining fans at V Festival in August

A DAMNING investigation has shown that nearly six in every seven music festival headline slots are filled with male musicians – the same ratio as about a decade ago.

The research found that the main slots at all major UK festivals are failing to show the diversity in our modern music scene.

Take the recent edition of Glastonbury, for example. The largest musical event on earth, of the six acts headlining its main Pyramid Stage over the three days, one – The xx with guitarist Romy Madley Croft – featured a female in their ranks.

The same can be said of their second largest Other stage. Friday night saw pop star Lorde back up all-male group Major Lazer, and that was that for the weekend.



Female fans would queue up to see their idols

In fact, you have to go as far down as the John Peel Stage to find a female solo artist getting top billing where queen of the decks Annie Mac performed Friday night, while all-girl band Warpaint rocked The Park Stage as top billing on the Saturday.

Some 80 per cent of Glastonbury's headliners in the past decade have been men, while in the same period Donington park metal fest Download's top artists have been 100 per cent male.

In total, the research found that from 321 headline acts at the UK's biggest festivals over the last 10 years, just 47 were all-female or held one woman in the group's line-up.

It is something that has annoyed Ellie Goulding, who hails from Kingston. The pop star recently took to her Twitter account to lament the lack of female artists taking the big slots at our festivals.

"Still so proud as a female artist to be headlining and playing festivals around the world every single year," she tweeted. "I don't see many females at these festivals."

Report by Leigh Sanders

It mirrors similar criticisms she aimed at Glasto in 2015. That year, Foo Fighters had to pull out of their headline set on the Pyramid Stage due to frontman Dave Grohl breaking his leg during a show. Florence & The Machine were called in at the last minute to replace them, meaning songstress Florence Welch became the first woman headliner on the world's most famous stage since Skunk Anansie closed Glasto in 1999.

Adele then followed Florence on the Pyramid in 2016, but more still needed to be done to break down barriers according to Brummie soul star Laura Mvula.

She branded the music industry last summer as "sexist and racist", adding that "if you say anything with assertiveness or authority, you are often quickly labelled a diva".

She even went as far as saying: "We are living in the Donald Trump time of music."

Chair of UK Music's Diversity Taskforce Keith Harris also joined the debate, recently calling the findings 'unsurprising' and adding festival organisers were 'cutting out huge sections of the population' with their top slot choices.

So why aren't females getting a look-in when it comes to the major headline slots?

Michael Baker, who works for the publication Festival Insights, which runs the UK Festival Awards, said: "Some festivals do attempt to address gender imbalance, such as Field Day, whose curator recently told me that they failed to book 50 per cent female acts because there simply weren't that many available."

Not all festivals seem to fall foul, then. And one is very close to home. Our very own V Festival – which hosts an annual party at Weston Park in Staffordshire – regularly puts female artists on a pedestal to inspire potential future stars.

Anti-establishment pop rocker Pink will get the feet stomping by closing the festival on August 20. While on the Saturday, the aforementioned Ms Goulding will get the crowd warmed up for Mr Beyonce – Jay Z.

A small warm-up event on the BBC Radio1 Stage on the Friday night will also be headlined by Annie Mac again.

Last year, Rihanna did the same at the venue near Weston-under-Lizard on the Saturday, while on the Sunday pop princess Sia backed up superstar Justin Bieber.

So what is the solution? Some people argue there is not enough top artists out there, but this seems to be nonsense.

So come on festival organisers, take the plunge. The talent is there, the interest is there, now it's your decision to switch the line-ups.



Kirsty Hayes, 13, was interested by what she saw

SCOTT'S GOT FAITH IN HIS NEW MUSIC

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Hallelujah! Scott's on a music mission

The churches of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire and Shropshire may be put to an unusual use in coming months as the region's Ivor Novello

Award-winning Scott Matthews embarks on a remarkable journey.

The Wolverhampton-based singer/songwriter is presently recording his sixth album, which is due for release in April, and hopes to record in a venue with stunning acoustics.

And rather than head to studios in London, Bath, Wales or Scotland – he wants to stay close to home and find a unique and bespoke environment in which to record. The idea is to capture the magic that Scott's concerts create, where fans from around the UK find themselves spellbound by the mystery of his evocative, spine-tingling songs.

Scott became a huge success when he released the hit single *Elusive*, which was a BBC Radio favourite and earned him a tour with the Foo Fighters, a major recording deal with Island – home to U2, Bob Marley, Nick Drake and others – and won an Ivor Novello Award.

He has since released five albums – including his two most recent, *Home Pt I* and *Home Pt II* – and is embarking on a new record, which has a working title of *Chapters*.

Scott says: "I'm writing at home and have a number of songs. I want to get to 15 or so, and whittle that down to 10. The idea for recording in a church came about because they have such brilliant acoustics. Recording in a unique environment, rather than a traditional studio, also adds a little magic to the performance. There's something that happens when I play a concert, a feeling, or an energy, that the audience and I both feel. The idea is that by recording in a church with sensational acoustics, I can recreate that feeling and commit it to the record."

The record will be released in spring 2018, with an accompanying tour. And Scott, one of the UK's most revered and respected singer/songwriters, is finally recording a stripped-down album featuring only him and a guitar.

SHED

Fans are being given the chance to engage with the recording process by getting regular updates from the artist, through an organisation called Pledge Music.

Pledge Music gives performers who choose not to have a record deal the opportunity to work directly with fans – where they pre-order signed copies of the work, which helps to pay the upfront costs of recording.

Scott adds: "I founded my own record label – Shedio – which is based around the converted garden shed at the bottom of my garden. That's the space where I usually record. The fan-funded model works really well because fans then get the chance to find out about the process while it is still on-going."



On a song – Scott won an Ivor Novello in 2007



They get regular updates, which might include messages from me, video updates – all sorts of things.

"Then, when the record is complete, they are the first to receive a signed copy of the new album, which is delivered to their door. It's pretty simple for people to get involved. They just need to go online and search for Pledge Music, then search for Scott Matthews and all of the details appear."

Scott says financing the project is not the most important part of Pledge. The thing that he enjoys best is having direct access to his fans.

"You might wake up one morning and there'll be a message from someone in Paraguay who has just discovered the back catalogue, which is great. Or, alternatively, you might get a fan from somewhere in the UK who is really passionate about the music and can speak articulately about particular songs."

"That really fuels my fire. Having that direct link with the fans, where they can tell me what they think, is a massive boost. And that's one of the things I'm looking forward to as I record my sixth album."

Scott remains in the spotlight and was recently asked by the BBC to unveil a commemorative Blue Plaque at the former home of iconic British folk singer Nick Drake, who lived at Tanworth-in-Arden.

Scott was happy to oblige and performed the ceremony alongside fellow singer/songwriter Simon Fowler, best known as frontman with Ocean Colour Scene.

"It was an enormous honour," he says. "There have been a few highlights in my career: winning an Ivor Novello, presenting John Martyn with a Lifetime Achievement Award in a room full of people like John Martyn and so on. But being asked to unveil the plaque

I'm very excited to be finally recording a record that's just me and a guitar

at Nick Drake's home was remarkable. There were little rural paths that he would have walked along. It was easy to marvel at the things that would have gone on in his room, at the records that would have been delivered to his door and so on. It was a real privileged, a very special moment." Scott, an avid Wolverhampton Wanderers fan, is looking forward to being back on the road in spring – though eagle-eyed fans might get the chance to see him play a few unannounced shows before then, when he trials new songs.

"You can learn more from a three-minute soundcheck, or by playing a song at a gig, than you can by spending a year writing and refining a song. So I plan to road-test a few of the songs with a small number of gigs this autumn. The record will be finished by December, I'll reflect for a little while and then it will be out in spring. I'm very excited to be finally recording a record that's just me and a guitar. And, having released five albums already, I'm just thrilled to have the opportunity to record and release a sixth."

● Fans who want to pre-order signed copies of Scott Scott's new album can log onto Pledge Music to receive regular updates at: www.pledgemusic.com/projects/scott-scott-studio-album-six

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Blondie in 2017



One way or another, Blondie are heart of class

Blondie are back with a new album, *Pollinator*, and a tour that calls in at Birmingham city centre's Barclaycard Arena on November 13.

The New York band was formed more than 40 years ago and still features original members, iconic frontwoman Debbie Harry, guitarist Chris Stein and drummer Clem Burke, alongside long standing band mates Leigh Foxx (bass), Tommy Kessler (guitar) and Matt Katz-Bohen (keyboard).

Emerging from the stateside punk scene, they became one of the greatest pop bands of the 1970s

and 80s. They still create new music to go alongside such classics as *Heart of Glass*, *Hanging On The Telephone*, *Sunday Girl*, *Dreaming*, *Call Me*, *Atomic*, *The Tide Is High*, *Rapture* and *Maria*.

Eleventh studio album *Pollinator*, which came out in May, features songs written by Stein and Harry alongside songwriting or studio contributions from former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr, Sia, Charli XCX, Nick Valensi from The Strokes, Joan Jett, Laurie Anderson, and Dave Sitek from TV On The Radio.

Blondie are also involved in the BEE Connected campaign to raise awareness of the decline in the bee population.

Brontë classic given Eyre time at Rep



THIS year marks the 170th anniversary of the first publication of Charlotte Brontë's classic novel of gothic romance *Jane Eyre*.

As part of the celebrations, the National Theatre with Bristol Old Vic are bringing an imaginative new stage adaptation to Birmingham Rep, from September 4 to 16, as part of a nationwide tour.

Brontë's much-loved story is still an inspiration. This dynamic production tells the story of one woman's fight for freedom. From her beginnings as a destitute

orphan, the spirited heroine faces life's obstacles head-on, surviving poverty, injustice and betrayal before taking the ultimate decision to follow her heart.

Director Sally Cookson said "Adapting a novel for the stage is a challenging prospect, especially when that novel is cited as many people's favourite of all time. It is always daunting when you're working on a story which everyone knows so well. It's a story that I love and have enjoyed a close relationship with ever since I was intrigued, as a child, by Orson Welles' black and white melodrama.

"I didn't actually read the novel

until I was in my early 20s and I remember thinking while I read it: 'This is a clarion cry for equal opportunities for women, not a story about a passive female'. I was struck by how modern Jane seemed - her spirit and strong will, her peculiar and brilliant mind striving for personal freedom. She was exactly the sort of person I wanted to be."

In this three hour staging Nadia Clifford, pictured, plays Jane Eyre with Tim Delap as Rochester.

See birmingham-rep.co.uk or call the box office on 0121 236 4455.

Trespass at the Grand for chills

Following the success of *The Woman in Black*, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre hosts another ghost story when *Trespass* is staged from August 15 to 21. In Emlyn Williams' play a widow asks a medium to help make contact with her recently deceased husband. The cast includes Rebecca Wheatley from *Casualty*, David Callister, pictured, from *The Bill*, Michelle Morris (*The Knock*) and Judy Buxton (*On The Up*). See grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212.



Rocking all over the Robin with Quo hits

A night of vintage Quo boogie will be heard at Bilston's Robin 2 when the original Status Quo drummer brings John Coghlan's Quo to the Black Country venue.

Drawing on the era From Pictures Of Matchstick Men to *Rocking All Over The World*, this big night out for the demin-clad head noddors will be held next Thursday, August 10.

Other highlights at the Robin include The Naked Beatles with Lusty Springfield tomorrow (Friday) which may sound like a dodgy movie but is actually a 60s tribute night. Then it's the MaetLoaf tribute 'Bat Out Of Hell' special on Saturday and Flash, Tribute to Queen, is on August 11. It's the Bilston reggae sunsplash with tributes to Bob Marley and UB40 on August 12. See therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

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CHOICE



Billy Connolly

Billy Connolly: Portrait of a Lifetime (BBC2, 9pm)
A programme celebrating Billy Connolly's 75th birthday and 50 years in the business, as three Scottish artists, John Byrne, Jack Vettriano and Rachel MacLean, each create a new portrait of the comedian and actor. As he sits with each artist, Billy talks about his remarkable career which has taken him from musician and stand up to Hollywood star and national treasure.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadia's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.00** Film: I Am Bolt. (2016) Documentary about the life and career of world-record breaking Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, who has won the 100m and 200m gold medals at the last three Olympics. **3.30** The Heroes of Super Saturday: Jess, Mo & Greg. (R) **4.25** Escape to the Continent. (R) **5.25** Pointless Celebrities. (R)
6.10 **BBC News.**
6.20 **Regional Programme.**
6.30 **World Athletics Championships 2017.** Gabby Logan presents coverage of the second night of events at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which will include the men's 100m final. Should he have made it through to the final as expected, Usain Bolt will be making his final individual appearance at a major championships and will be looking to bow out while still the fastest man in the world. Plus, medals are decided in the men's discus and long jump, and women's 10,000m, the heptathlon continues with the shot put and 200m, and the women's 1500m semi-finals take place. With analysis from Michael Johnson, Colin Jackson and Denise Lewis.
10.00 **BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.20 **Film: Mrs Brown's Boys D'Movie.** (2014) The indomitable Irish matriarch discovers that a plan is afoot by developers to buy the famous Dublin street market where her family has run a fruit and veg stall for generations. Assembling a band of eccentric allies, she plans to fight back, only to realise her daughter is not interested in taking over the family business. Comedy, starring Brendan O'Carroll.
11.55 **Film: I Know What You Did Last Summer.** (1997) Four teenagers accidentally run over a stranger and hide the body rather than inform the authorities, only to find themselves stalked the following year by a shadowy figure who takes great delight in disposing of them in a variety of gruesome ways. Horror, starring Jennifer Love Hewitt.
1.30 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 **Film:** The Spanish Main. (1945)
7.45 **Film:** The Magic Box. (1951) **9.30** World Athletics Championships 2017. **2.00** Food & Drink. (R) **2.30** Flog It! (R) **3.20** Mastermind. (R) **3.50** University Challenge. (R) **4.20** Only Connect. (R) **4.50** Gardeners' World. (R) **5.50** The Sweet Makers: A Victorian Treat. (R)
6.50 **Proms Extra.** Katie Derham, Stuart Skelton, Ailish Tynan and Ken Burton discuss Beethoven's Symphony No 9. Plus, a Proms centenary tribute to Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie.
7.30 **Royal Cousins at War.** Part one of two. Documentary examining what impact the relationships between cousins Nicholas II of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and George V of the United Kingdom had on the outbreak of the First World War. This episode focusses on the story of the emerging divisions and rivalries between the inter-related royal houses of Europe during the 19th century. Featuring contributions by historians Karina Urbach, Miranda Carter and Piers Brendon. Tamsin Greig narrates. (R)
8.30 **Dad's Army.** Corporal Jones finds himself cast adrift during an exercise pitting Mainwaring and his home-front heroes against their arch-rival Captain Square. (R)
9.00 **Billy Connolly: Portrait of a Lifetime.** A programme celebrating the life and career of Billy Connolly, as three Scottish artists each create a new portrait of the comedian and actor.
10.00 **World Athletics Championships 2017.** Gabby Logan presents reaction to and analysis of the second night of events at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
10.30 **Film: What We Did on Our Holiday.** (2014) Three children give away all the secrets of their parents' troubled marriage while visiting their grandfather. Comedy drama, starring Rosamund Pike.
11.55 **Golf: Women's Open Highlights.** Eilidh Barbour presents action from the third day of the event, which this year is staged at Kingsbarns Golf Links in Fife.
1.00 **Film:** In the House. (2012) A teacher encourages a pupil to write about his relationship with a wealthy family, which feeds unhealthy obsessions. Drama, with Fabrice Luchini and Kristin Scott Thomas. **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Gok's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News. Weather. **12.25** Tipping Point. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing Live: Goodwood Festival. Coverage of the fifth and final day of the event. **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** Little Big Shots USA.
6.00 **Regional Programme;** Weather.
6.05 **ITV News;** Weather.
6.15 **You've Been Framed! Bites Back!** Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, including an angry woman who throws a banana into her husband's leg, an electrolysis accident that delivers a powerful electric shock to an unlucky man's nipple and why teaching a toddler to operate a full-size tractor is a bad idea. (R)
7.15 **Catchphrase.** Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000.
8.00 **Film: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies.** (2014) Premiere. Dwarf King Thorin reclaims control of his homeland, but his descent into madness places him on the brink of war with his human and elven allies. As Thorin's Hobbit friend Bilbo tries to save the tormented ruler from himself, a vast horde of orcs gathers to destroy them all. Conclusion of the fantasy adventure trilogy, starring Martin Freeman, Richard Armitage, Ian McKellen, Luke Evans and Orlando Bloom.
10.35 **ITV News;** Weather.
10.50 **Film: GoldenEye.** (1995) Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean and Izabella Scorpion.
1.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Tenerife Bluetail. **6.40** Motor Sport: Chateau Impney Hill Climb. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **12.50** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.20** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R)
6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Britain at Low Tide.** Tori Herridge and Alex Langlands set out to document Britain's industrial and natural maritime history, using state-of-the-art technology to comb the nation's exposed coastlines during times of low tide. They first head out to the Northumbrian coastline, to investigate the tragic story of a French fishing trawler that was wrecked off shore in 1913. (R)
8.00 **Paul O'Grady's Hollywood.** New series. The first of three programmes in which the veteran TV presenter delves into the rich vein of cinematic history to find out what it takes to transform a film into a silver-screen masterpiece capable of standing the test of time. Taking in everything from big production musicals to vehicles for enduring screen heroines, Paul reveals what makes celebrated movies so memorable. He begins with classic "weepies", from the early silent melodramas through to James Cameron's Titanic, and hears from Jon Voight, Bernard Cribbins, Celine Dion and the casts of E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial and Beaches.
9.00 **Film: Red.** (2010) A retired CIA agent survives an assassination attempt and realises something in his past has made him a target. He sets out to reunite the members of his old hit squad to find out who is trying to kill them and why, but in the process, uncovers dangerous secrets. Action thriller, with Bruce Willis and Morgan Freeman.
11.10 **Film: American Reunion.** (2012) **1.15** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.05** The Last Leg. (R) **3.00** Hollyoaks. **5.05** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.40** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **10.55** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.10** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.05** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
6.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Agents Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner get caught up in a dispute between a landlord and a tenant who refuses to move out, and Brian O'Shaughnessy and Delroy Anglin chase a £17,000 debt. Meanwhile, in Essex, a couple owe their neighbour £11,000, and on the south coast, debt collection from a Turkish restaurant gets complicated when there is confusion about ownership. (R)
7.00 **Cricknet on 5.** England v South Africa. Highlights of the second day's play in the final Test of the four-match series, which took place at Old Trafford in Manchester.
8.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away: Violent Encounters.** Two enforcement agents make a shocking discovery in a child's bedroom during an eviction, and a debtor gets physical when he is visited over wages owed to a freelancer. (R)
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Sunderland v Derby County and Wolverhampton Wanderers v Middlesbrough.
9.50 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Southend United v Blackburn Rovers, and Forest Green Rovers v Barnet.
10.20 **Celebrity Big Brother.** Highlights of the housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to living alongside one another.
11.20 **Queens of Pop.** A compilation of hit music videos by chart-topping female soloists, highlighting how women have dominated the music industry like never before during the past 10 years.
12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Royal Funerals: The Inside Story. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Capability Brown's Unfinished Garden **8.00** Britain's Treasure Islands **9.00** I Know Who You Are **11.15** Top of the Pops: 1984 **12.30** From Andy's Candy to Zebedee: The Golden Age of Children's TV **1.30** Slade at the BBC **2.30** Nina Simone & Me with Laura Mvula **3.00** Britain's Treasure Islands **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.30 Take Me Out **12.40** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **1.10** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.40** Film: The Waterboy (1998) **2.40** FYI Daily **2.45** Film: The Waterboy (1998) **3.30** Film: Yogi Bear (2010) **4.30** FYI Daily **4.35** Film: Yogi Bear (2010) **5.10** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **6.10** FYI Daily **6.15** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **7.15** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **9.00** Film: Fast & Furious 5 (2011) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Fast & Furious 5 (2011) **11.35** Family Guy **1.05** Film: This is the End (2013) **2.05** FYI Daily **2.10** Film: This is the End (2013) **3.00** Teleshopping
ITV3
12.55 Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo (1990) **2.55** Lewis **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **1.55** On the Buses **2.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
12.15 Film: Dunkirk (1958) **1.25** FYI Daily **1.30** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **3.00** Film: The Alamo (1960) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05** Film: The Alamo (1960) **6.15** Storage Wars **7.15** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **8.20** FYI Daily **8.25** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **9.00** Film: Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) **11.45** Film: Harry Brown (2009) **12.45** FYI Daily **12.50** Film: Harry Brown (2009) **1.50** Road Racing Series **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
1.05 The Goldbergs **3.35** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.00** Film: Bridesmaids (2011) **11.30** Gogglebox **1.10** Rude Tube **2.15** Tattoo Fixers **3.10** Gogglebox **3.50** How I Met Your Mother **4.40** Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 ParaNorman (2012) **1.00** The Boxtrolls (2014) **2.50** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **5.05** Carry On Cleo (1964) **6.55** Ghostbusters II (1989) **9.00** Oblivion (2013) **11.25** The Pyramid (2014) **1.10** The Master (2012) **4.00** Close

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CHOICE



Diana, Princess of Wales

Diana: In Her Own Words (Channel 4, 8pm)

Documentary featuring never-before-seen footage of Diana, Princess of Wales, recorded by her speech consultant between 1992 and 1993 as she sought to define her public persona and present her own version of events reported in the press, touching on her marriage and experience of public life. The programme also features in-depth interviews with people close to her.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. **Weather**. **1.15** Wallace & Gromit: A Grand Day Out. (R) **1.40** Film: Frozen. (2013) Disney animated fantasy adventure, with the voice of Kristen Bell. **3.10** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.40** Songs of Praise. **4.15** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.00** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Countryfile.

6.30 **World Athletics Championships 2017**. Gabby Logan presents coverage of the third night of events at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Great Britain's Katarina Johnson-Thompson will conclude her bid for gold in the heptathlon when she competes in the 800m, but she was expected to face stiff competition throughout the seven disciplines from Belgium's Olympic champion Nafissatou Thiam. Plus, medals are decided in the women's pole vault, and semi-finals take place in the men's 400m and 110m hurdles. With analysis from Michael Johnson, Colin Jackson and Denise Lewis, and commentary by Steve Cram, Andrew Cotter, Brendan Foster and Steve Backley, and reports from Ore Oduba and Phil Jones. Coverage continues on BBC2.

9.00 **Poldark**. Sir Francis places Ross in charge of a group of volunteers to defend the Cornish coast after Prudie and Tholly catch sight of French ships on the horizon. George returns from parliament and is outraged to discover that Drake is living in the smithy on the edge of Trenwith land. However, Tom Harty is only too happy to take on the task of making sure he does not remain there for long. Emma struggles to reconcile her feelings for Sam with their religious differences, and Hugh continues to court Demelza in secret. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 **MOTD: Community Shield Highlights**. Chelsea v Arsenal. Action from the traditional curtain-raiser to the top-flight campaign.

11.15 **Film: The Recruit**. (2003) Thriller, starring Al Pacino and Colin Farrell.

1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.05** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** World Athletics Championships 2017. **5.00** Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. (R)

6.00 **Steve Backshall's Extreme Mountain Challenge**. Part one of two. The naturalist leads a team of rock climbers across Venezuela's tepuis – sheer-sided mountains surrounded by jungle. In the first episode, he attempts an ascent of a rockface that has never been climbed previously to discover what kind of animals live at the summit. However, to get there he will have to brave wildlife, rapids and a run-in with a rickety biplane. (R)

7.00 **Inside the Factory**. Gregg Wallace and Cherry Healey visit factories to find out how household staples are made and Ruth Goodman examines their history. (R)

8.00 **Secrets of Silicon Valley**. Part one of two. Jamie Bartlett investigates how technology companies are shaping the future of the world, and the potential negative consequences of the drive towards progress.

9.00 **World Athletics Championships 2017**. Gabby Logan presents further coverage of the third night of events at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, including the women's 100m final, which was won by Jamaica's Olympic champion Elaine Thompson two years ago. Plus, the men's shot put final concludes, and double Olympic champion David Rudisha is expected to be involved in the men's 800m semi-finals. With analysis from Michael Johnson, Colin Jackson and Denise Lewis, commentary by Steve Cram, Andrew Cotter, Brendan Foster and Steve Backley, and reports from Ore Oduba.

10.30 **Gareth Thomas: Hate in the Beautiful Game**. Former Wales and Lions rugby union captain Gareth Thomas investigates what is preventing gay footballers from coming out, talking to players, fans and managers in a bid to find out.

11.30 **Golf: Women's Open Highlights**. Eilidh Barbour presents action from the fourth and final day.

12.30 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.25** Holby City. (R) **2.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjabo: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Long Lost Family. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** ITV News. **Weather**. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.55** Rebound. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.25** Film: The Living Daylights. (1987) James Bond adventure, starring Timothy Dalton.

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 **The Chase Celebrity Special**. Phil Daniels, Janette Manrara, Isabel Hodgins, and Roy Hudd answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh.

7.30 **Film: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**. (2009) The young wizard is given the task of uncovering the secrets of Lord Voldemort's past as the evil sorcerer's henchmen cause havoc in both the magical and Muggle worlds. With the help of headmaster Dumbledore, Harry ventures into the memories of those who knew the Dark Lord during his early years, hoping to gain an insight into the secret behind his apparent immortality. However, Voldemort's influence extends much closer to home than expected, as Harry's rival Malfoy is chosen to carry out a sinister mission. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe.

10.25 ITV News; Weather.

10.40 **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories**. Barrister Robert Rinder reveals the story of a gang of criminals who attempted to steal the world's most perfectly formed diamond from the Millennium Dome in November 2000. (R)

11.40 **Take Me Out**. A fitness instructor, a pianist, a research executive and a construction worker submit themselves for approval in front of Paddy McGuinness's panel of 30 single ladies. (R)

12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **6.10** Last Man Standing. **6.35** Cycling: Gigante De Piedra. **7.00** Motor Sport: Army Road Race Build-Up. **7.30** Motor Sport: Army Road Race 2017. **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** UEFA Women's Euro 2017: The Final Live. Coverage of the showpiece match (Kick-off 4.00pm).

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 **The Mystery of the Crossrail Skulls**. Documentary examining the discovery of dozens of Roman-era skulls by engineers working beneath London's Liverpool Street station. The remains have been identified as dating back to Roman times, but it has yet to be determined who these people were and how their heads ended up buried on the site. Archaeologists examine the bones for evidence of the various theories that have been suggested, questioning whether the skulls belonged to gladiators, executed rebels or the victims of a massacre, or formed part of a grisly ritual. (R)

8.00 **Diana: In Her Own Words**. Documentary featuring never-before-seen footage of Diana, Princess of Wales, recorded by her speech consultant between 1992 and 1993 as she sought to define her public persona and present her own version of events reported in the press, touching on her marriage and experience of public life. The programme also features in-depth interviews with people close to her.

9.50 **Film: The King's Speech**. (2010) The younger son of George V struggles to cope with an uncontrollable stammer, prompting his wife to enlist the aid of an eccentric Australian speech therapist. The support and friendship of the doctor prove invaluable when a crisis places the repressed prince on the throne, just as the outbreak of the Second World War leaves the country in need of a strong king. Oscar-winning fact-based drama, starring Colin Firth.

12.00 **Film: The Anomaly**. (2014) **1.40** 60 Days in Jail. (R) **2.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **3.25** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. (R) **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wessper. (R) **7.05** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.00** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.40** Floogals. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.05** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.05** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.30** Film: Cheaper by the Dozen 2. (2005) **1.20** The Royals: Young, Rich & Famous. (R) **2.15** Inside Buckingham Palace: The Queen's Worst Year. (R) **3.15** Inside Buckingham Palace. (R) **4.15** Inside Buckingham Palace. (R) **5.10** Film: Dirty Dancing. (1987) Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey.

7.00 **Cricket on 5**. England v South Africa. Highlights of the third day's play in the final Test of the four-match series, which took place at Old Trafford in Manchester.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 **Dads Make You Laugh Out Loud**. Compilation of internet videos featuring fathers doing bizarre things, including a showcase of the world's most ridiculous dad dancing and some DIY dentistry using a helicopter to remove a loose tooth. With contributions from comedians Ellie Taylor, Angela Barnes and Dave Spikely. (R)

9.00 **Celebrity Big Brother**. The ups and downs of life in the BB house as friendships and alliances are made, battle lines are drawn and arguments erupt.

10.00 **The Last Days of Patrick Swayze**. Forensic pathologist Dr. Jason Payne-James examines the death of the movie star in 2009 from pancreatic cancer, a condition that had left him all but unrecognisable.

11.05 **Film: Point Break**. (1991) An undercover FBI agent infiltrates a Californian surfing gang to investigate a spate of armed robberies. Kathryn Bigelow's thriller, starring Keanu Reeves.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **4.00** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 BBC Proms 2017 **8.30** The Richard Burton Diaries **9.00** Frank Skinner on George Formby **10.00** Babs **11.30** Timeshift: Bouffants, Beethives and Bobs – The Hairstyles That Shaped Britain **12.30** Capability Brown's Unfinished Garden **1.30** Timeshift: How to Be a Lady – An Elegant History **2.30** Frank Skinner on George Formby **3.30** Close

ITV2

1.05 Mr Bean **2.15** You've Been Framed! Gold A to Z of Animals **3.20** Film: Planet 51 (2009) **4.20** FYI Daily **4.25** Film: Planet 51 (2009) **5.10** Film: A Bug's Life (1998) **7.15** Film: The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **10.00** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.50** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Viral Tap **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3

11.45 The Darling Buds of May **12.55** Film: Columbo: Butterfly in Shades of Grey (1993) **3.50** Wycliffe **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Lewis **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.00** Wire in the Blood **2.10** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.25** On the Buses **5.50** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

2.10 Film: The Alamo (1960) **4.20** Film: The Man from the Alamo (1953) **5.20** FYI Daily **5.25** Film: The Man from the Alamo (1953) **6.20** The Chase: Celebrity Special **7.05** Film: Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach (1988) **9.00** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **11.10** Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) **1.20** Car Crash Global **1.25** Hogan's Heroes **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4

12.05 Born in Chelsea: Baby Steps **1.05** Kevin Can Wait **1.35** New Girl **2.35** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Night at the Museum (2006) **10.10** Don't Tell the Bride **11.15** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.20** Gogglebox **1.10** Rude Tube **2.15** First Dates **3.10** How I Met Your Mother **3.35** Hollywoods

Film4

11.00 Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **1.00** Short Circuit (1986) **3.00** The Borrowers (1997) **4.40** Small Soldiers (1998) **6.50** G.I. Joe: Retaliation (2013) **9.00** Child 44 (2015) **11.40** The A-Team (2010) **2.00** Wild Bill (2011) **4.00** Close

THE KNIGHTS QUEST

CHARITY WEEK & UPDATE

WHY NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THE STOCKS
SATURDAY 5TH AUGUST
12PM-3PM

A SPECIAL MENTION TO JASON JONES, MARK ADAMS AND DOMINIC ATKINS WHO WILL BE CLIMBING SNOWDONIA.

THURSDAY
3rd August
STARMAKERS KARAOKE

Plus SLAVE AUCTION, AUCTION of a PROMISE and RAFFLE Guaranteed to be a laugh
FREE ENTRY

SATURDAY
5th August
PURE MAGIC

Freddie Mercury Tribute Plus Bryan May Tribute
Disco 'til 2am
£4 Entry
Starts 8.30pm

SATURDAY
5th August Daytime
8am-11am
THE BIG BREAKFAST £5
Sponsored by **MAKRO**
10am-12noon
ROY DAVIES
SILENCE IS GOLDEN
12noon - 3pm
THE STOCKS
Attendance from MAA and Blood Bikers throughout (Jayne's in the stocks from 2pm)

WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A SPECIAL MENTION TO ALL OUR SPONSORS.

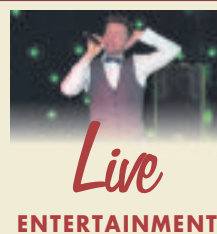
FRIDAY
4th August
DAVE GOLDING
Plus DISCO
Including Raffle
£3 Entry
Starts 8.30pm

SUNDAY
6th August
Blood Bikers and Barnaby from Midlands Air Ambulance from 12 noon
STARMAKERS PARTY NIGHT
EVERYONE'S A WINNER RAFFLE PARTY GAMES
FREE ENTRY Starts 8.30pm

THE KNIGHTS QUEST



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Live
ENTERTAINMENT

Excellent
AMENITIES

THUR 03.08.17
STARMAKERS KARAOKE
FRI 04.08.17
DAVE GOULDING
SAT 05.08.17
PURE MAGIC
SUN 06.08.17
STARMAKERS PARTY NIGHT
MON 07.08.17
BENS DISCO & KARAOKE

TUE 08.08.17
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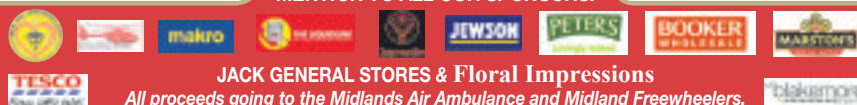
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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

A Healthy Place to Die: The Gourmet Detective, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Charming culinary expert Henry Ross is invited to give a speech at a food conference at a luxury resort, but when a journalist guest goes missing, and later turns up dead, Henry once again finds himself joining forces with no-nonsense police detective Maggie Price to solve the crime. Crime comedy sequel, starring Dylan Neal and Brooke Burns. (2015)

TUESDAY

Spirit Riders, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A rebellious teenager is arrested and for her punishment is sent to an equine therapy camp, where she forms a connection with a spirited thoroughbred horse that she helps to train with the help of the ranch's no-nonsense owner. Family drama, starring Alexandria DeBerry, C Thomas Howell, Lance Henriksen and Olivia Osteen. (2015)



Strictly Ballroom, Friday, BBC1, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY

Broken Trust, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An attorney prepares to take on the biggest case of her career against a major pharmaceutical company, only for the lawyer who taught her everything she knows to be kidnapped. She enlists the aid of her police officer ex-husband in rescuing her mentor, while still ensuring a just outcome to the trial. Thriller, starring Laura Vandervoort. (2012)

THURSDAY

Viva Las Vegas, BBC2, 2.55pm
A charismatic racing driver arrives in the city to prepare for its first grand prix. Unfortunately, his car has no engine, so to make the money to buy one he takes a job as a casino waiter. However, he loses focus when he falls in love, leaving a rival with the means to steal the race and his girl. Musical, starring Elvis Presley. (1964)

FRIDAY

Strictly Ballroom, BBC1, 11.05pm
A ballroom dancer, shunned for his unconventional style, tries to win a championship title with the aid of an awkward novice. Australian comedy, with Paul Mercurio and Tara Morice. (1992)

Robin's theory takes the inquiry in a new direction

Thanks to her roles in Mad Men, the original series of Top of the Lake and The Handmaid's Tale, Elisabeth Moss can claim to have starred in some of the most acclaimed TV shows of the past decade. But looking at her impressive CV, some viewers may wonder if after all that weighty drama, she ever fancies doing something a little bit lighter, like a wacky sitcom.

It seems not – she apparently only signed up for Top of the Lake: China Girl on the understanding that it would be even darker than the first series.

She explains that when writer and director Jane Campion asked her if she would be interested in reprising the role of detective Robin Griffin: "I said I would love to, but it would need to be more challenging than season one, otherwise there would be no point. I remember saying, 'I just want her to be challenged,' and thinking... how Robin could be challenged, what she might be going through."

And it seems Campion did not

disappoint her. Moss says: "Without spoiling anything, the thing that we reveal in the flashback and some things that have happened over the last four years to Robin have put her in this really, really dark place. She's not had an easy life, this girl. So she starts out in Season 2 in this much darker place, and really messed up, so when I was reading it for the first time I was like, yes, yes, yes, yes!"

But it wasn't just the prospect of playing someone deeply troubled and miserable that attracted Moss to the part – there was also the chance to work with Campion again.

The actress says: "There's nobody like Jane. I've had the privilege of working with some very talented and amazing people, both well known and not well known, and there's something about the way that she speaks to you and the way that she guides you on set that isn't like anyone else."

"She has this very in-tune way of guiding you through a scene. She'll say something that makes you go,

"Oh, I didn't think about it that way," or she'll say "this is your playground sweetie. Just have fun."

However, the characters don't appear to be having much fun in this week's episode as Robin's investigation into the murder of 'China Girl' takes a revealing new turn.

Meanwhile, Julia and Pyke launch an investigation of their own into Puss, the man who plans to marry their teenage daughter. When their findings lead to a public confrontation, Puss storms out – and Mary follows him.

Pyke and Julia are forced to turn to Robin, who begins to discover just how complex motherhood can be. Moss says: "This season is about being a mother and a parent, and it's interesting, going from that very strong theme of season one to an even stronger theme in season two, with all of these plot lines being connected around this central idea. But done in a brilliantly subtle way, which is beautiful."



Top of the Lake: China Girl, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

canny BBC bosses scheduled this new drama, and Ms Whittaker, as usual, is on top form, here playing nurse Cath Hardacre. Driven to desperate measures, she steals the identity of her best friend, an A&E doctor and begins a new life in Edinburgh as Dr Ally Sutton. Blake Harrison from The Inbetweeners also stars.

WEDNESDAY

My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947 BBC1, 9pm

Anita Rani tells the emotional stories of four different families - Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and British colonial - caught up in the violence during the Partition of India, as they travel for the first time to the homes in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh that their families fled in terror. Binita Kane arrives in Bangladesh to investigate what happened when her Hindu father Bim had to flee his ancestral village as a boy. Meanwhile, Mandy Duke heads to Calcutta, scene of some of the worst Partition violence, to uncover the amazing story of her grandfather Arthur Wise. Plus, we also follow Asad Ali Syed and his grandson

Sameer, two British Muslims with Pakistani heritage, as they journey to the Indian town of Ambala, to search for the house where Asad was born. Finally, Anita investigates the events that led to her own grandfather's first wife, children and her great grandfather losing their lives.

THURSDAY

10 Puppies and Us BBC2, 8pm

Emma Lowe goes in search of a special puppy, wanting one that will act as a therapy dog for her four-year-old son, who has Down's syndrome, and soothe him when he is distressed. Meanwhile, newlyweds Leigh and Bella are forced to call in behaviourist Louise Glazebrook when their new pug Butch Cassidy has trouble sleeping on a night. There are also catch-ups with salon owner Hannah, who is taking on her



Teach My Pet To Do That, Friday, ITV, 8pm

third Chihuahua, and psychic Delia as she welcomes the big-breed Leonberger she fell in love with. But as the small puppy grows, she finds herself completely out of her depth.

FRIDAY

Teach My Pet To Do That ITV, 8pm

New series. Animal lover and comedian Alexander Armstrong is joined by a team of specialist pet trainers as they teach a range of animals and pets to pull off incredible tricks. In the first episode, the host welcomes a daschund labrador cross called Eric and a miniature horse call Aslan, as trainers Jo-Rosie Haffenden and Nando Brown attempt to teach them how to answer a door to the cue of a doorbell. Elsewhere in the programme, the trainers hit the road and attempt to train River the cat to ride on the back of Moss the dog.

World Athletics Championships 2017 BBC1, 8.30pm

Gabby Logan presents further coverage of the eighth night at The London Stadium in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Defending champions are expected to go head-to-head with Olympic gold medalists in both the women's 200m and 3,000m steeplechase.

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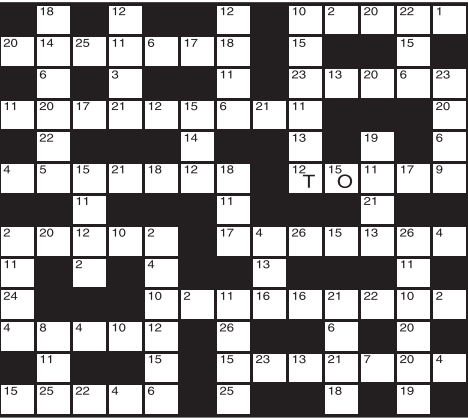
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BRAIN GYM

No.441

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
X	Q	T	G	K	Y	R	V	M	N	O	E	S
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
A	H	I	F	L	J	P	U	Z	B	C	W	D

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

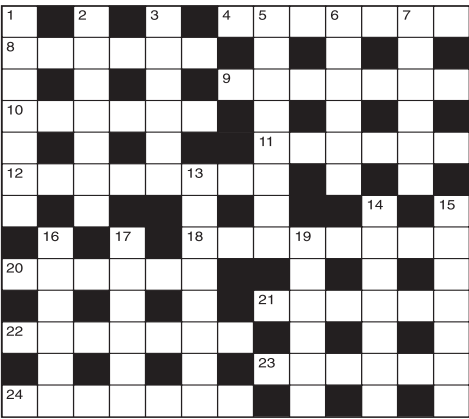
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- They accompany wild Cortes to the south (7)
- Charged for being drunk (6)
- A politician after alternative rhetorical expression (7)
- What the watch did is marked as correct (6)
- The top of a sugar-coated cake? (3-3)
- Not in favour of a little work modelling (8)
- Fixed a fight and attacked (3,5)
- Isn't able to keep a girl in bed (6)
- Top grade fish in poor condition (6)
- About to do some arithmetic and tell a story (7)
- Onslaught to put new life into the battery (6)
- Put one's foot down and made an impression (7)

Down

- One tail wagging in high spirits! (7)
- Crazy internationals are tearaways (7)
- Removes any inclination (6)
- Seeing about painting being put up in a right line (8)
- Not in the clique for a start (6)
- Sailor Brown checked material (6)
- The cane isn't used for example (8)
- Artistic work by the shearer? (7)
- Cause amazement when rags get out of order (7)
- Half last camping gear in lying out of sight (6)
- Where the schoolboy may be found to be a tell-tale (6)
- What attracts the moth to settle (6)



Quick Clues:

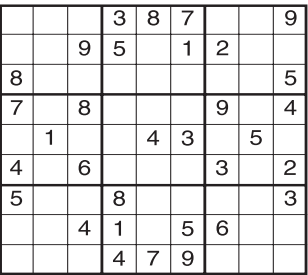
Across

- An attendant (7)
- Accustomed (6)
- Mysterious (7)
- Dried grape (6)
- Easement (6)
- Break (8)
- Unmindful (8)
- For each (6)
- Interior (6)
- Think true (7)
- Leave off (6)
- Brittle (7)

Down

- Diaphragm (7)
- Melodious (7)
- Portray (6)
- Real (8)
- Subject to (6)
- Delicate (6)
- Vast change (8)
- Shortfall (7)
- Views (7)
- Seem (6)
- Vision (6)
- A meal (6)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

9	2	4	1	8	5	7	6	3
1	6	3	2	4	7	8	9	5
5	8	7	9	3	6	4	2	1
2	7	9	4	1	3	6	5	8
3	4	8	5	6	9	2	1	7
6	1	5	8	7	2	3	4	9
8	5	6	7	2	1	9	3	4
7	9	2	3	5	4	1	8	6
4	3	1	6	9	8	5	7	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Small change; 9 Hip; 10 Went to sea; 11 Floods; 13 Rush mat; 14 Affair; 16 Sexton; 18 Sent out; 19 Paris; 20 Editorial; 21 Leo; 22 Rest assured. Down: 2 Map; 3 Lawns; 4 Centre; 5 Artist; 6 Gasometer; 7 Sharp answer; 8 Parting shot; 12 Offensive; 15 Iron out; 17 Stairs; 19 Pilau; 21 Lee.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Substantial; 9 Rye; 10 Attention; 11 Fleet; 13 Emanate; 14 Choice; 16 Advise; 18 Emulate; 19 Toned; 20 Constrains; 21 Fan; 22 Depredatory. Down: 2 Use; 3 Scant; 4 Anthem; 5 Tankard; 6 Agitation; 7 Proficiency; 8 Independent; 12 Eloquence; 15 Chatter; 17 Regard; 19 Tenet; 21 Far.

Quiz

- In which ocean did the mutiny on the Bounty take place?
- What type of animal is a marmoset?
- Which religion is divided between the Digambaras and the Svetambaras?
- In which country is the Grande Dixence Dam?
- Of which country is Cape York Peninsula the most northerly mainland point?
- Of which rodent is the guinea pig a species?
- Which town is the administrative centre of Cornwall?
- What do we call the biennial Pastinaca sativa?
- Who is best known as the author of the Doctor books?
- The troy pound is used for weighing what?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Anthony Blunt; 2 South American tree; 3 Camel; 4 Uranus; 5 Spain; 6 Sinbad; 7 Oregon; 8 Laurel; 9 7 million pounds; 10 Mars.

Niner: SHIPBOARD

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

84669126
43728
573826

gives a poet,
gives a second poet,
gives a third poet.

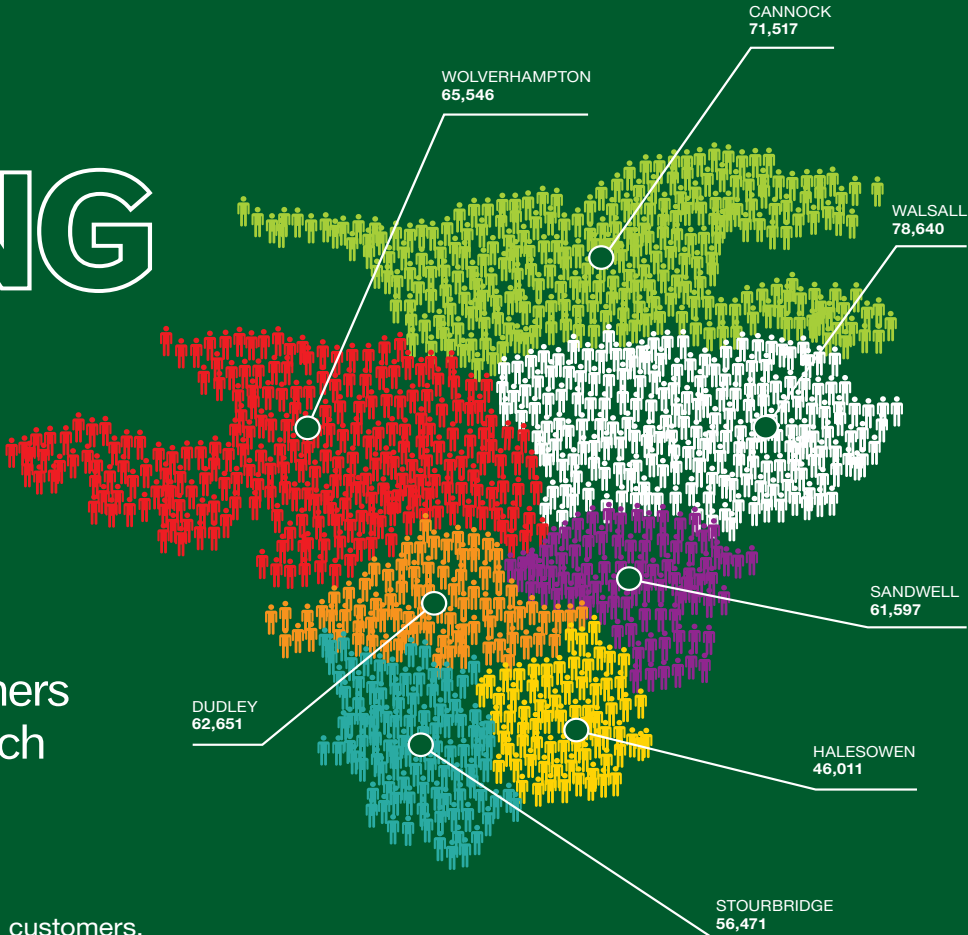
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Boy, how things have changed... casinos today are as much about food, shopping and entertainment as they are about the gambling... and Birmingham's Broadway Casino is no different.

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Nestled away in the popular Broadway Plaza, the casino has been a thriving venue for many years, often attracting some of the world's biggest names in poker during its special festivals.

For first timers, the set up may seem intimidating as you're met outside by two doormen, before showing your ID in order to gain entry through the barrier.

But once you're in, the sheer size and elegance of the building blows you away. A huge private bar on the left, plush sofas to recline on and take a break from the action and of course plenty of casino tables, offering a host of different games.

I am all too familiar with the layout having enjoyed plenty of nights of Texas Hold'em over the years, but I was very intrigued to try out the new Italian restaurant, ironically called 'The Restaurant'.

This new reboot replaced a slightly strange Chinese/Italian/Indian and Thai fusion restaurant called Mirage, that offered plenty of options without really having a true

Toasted bread with garlic, chopped tomato and basil



identity. That cannot be said of 'The Restaurant,' whose mission statement promised 'a taste of Italy renowned for its fresh ingredients and rustic meals'.

The menu was a breath of fresh air, no more Caesar salad followed by tandoori chicken or Vietnamese noodles – this was crisp, elegant and most important of all, simple.

The best Italian food is simple, the freshness of the ingredients are there to speak for themselves.

Prices appeared very reasonable and nobody will not be disappointed with the selections on offer.

I decided on the 'Bruschetta Basilico,' which to you and me is toasted bread, with garlic, chopped tomatoes and basil. The dish was served by an authentic Italian named Roberto, who I came to learn was the manager of the restaurant.

Happily done I awaited my main dish of the evening, the sea bass. Yes, I could have gone a little more indulgent, but I wanted to see exactly how they executed a delicate piece of fish on a busy Friday night.

When it arrived, I was not disappointed. Visually stunning, their presentation was spot on and I was

delighted they showcased the whole fish rather than two boneless fillets that often look pretty sad on the plate.

Roberto (full name Roberto Santolamazza) hails from Rome. No fake Italian accent here, he was the real deal and his warmth and passion for the food made the experience all the better.

I was too full to have a dessert, but the plates flying out on the other tables looked sublime.

I will certainly be returning and the best thing about leaving is that you can win your meal on the way out!

NATHAN JUDAH

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4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer.
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

ROSEDENE RESCUE CENTRE
1, Radley Road, Rushall, Walsall, WS4 1LN.
01922 627013.
Open Monday to Saturday 11am - 5pm.
Sundays - Bank Holidays 11am - 4pm.
Takes in relinquished dogs from owners, all areas (if they are vet checked up to date with their jabs).
Donations of dog food, toys, bedding and vet bills always appreciated.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

FLAT TO LET WEDNESFIELD
Fully furnished, refurbished to high standard, with off road parking, would suit working gent, age 45+.
£85pw including some bills.
01902 304258.

SMART SINGLE ROOMS in Shared house, Netherton. £85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks deposit. 07940 116130.

THREE BEDROOM Finchfield, CH, garage space, modernised. Two toilets, £600 pcm. 01902 335683.

TWO BEDROOM newly refurbished house Gornal with garden and parking for 2 cars, no DSS. £575pcm. 07854 825005 Sarah.

flats for sale

TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT
In Penn Village.
£110,000 ono.
01902 331155.

overseas property

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7 Jobs

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BARGAIN
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998 cc, automatic, pas, CD,
long MoT, 80k, 1996, P reg.
£325.
07818 498054.

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Hilldale Caravans

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Mr Causser

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John - Wednesfield Carpentry & Gates.

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Michael - Portway Fencing

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Classified Ads

MUST BE SEEN

TOYOTA YARIS 1.3
2005, 5dr hatchback.
2 lady owners from new.
full MoT, recently serviced.
Service history.
Immaculate condition.
£1,950.
07780 333067.

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

ALFA ROMEO 159
2012, 96,000 miles, black, electric windows, air con, fsh, MoT, central locking, 1 owner, cruise control, 2 litre, diesel, 1170 bhp.
£7,995 ono.
07903 415531.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

BMW Z4 2.5i CONVERTIBLE
03 reg.,
long MoT,
service history.
£4,500 ono
Ring for details
01902 789993 / 07773 260339.

CHEVY CRUZ
2011, 28,000 Miles, Black 1.6 automatic, electric windows, air bag, air con, fsh, alarm, long MoT, central locking, tax, Stereo, CD
£3,000 ono
01902736965

ECONOMICAL

CITROEN BELLINGO MULTI SPACE 1.4 LPG
06 reg.,
12 months MoT, red, 83,000 miles, new shockers and windscreen, good condition.
Cheap to run.
£1,600
07988 273136.

BARGAIN

FIAT DOBLO 1.3 DIESEL
Low mileage
MoT.
£1,695.
07940 150540.

MUST BE SEEN

HONDA JAZZ AUTO 1.4
56 reg,
second owner from new,
69,000 miles, FSH,
MoT 6 months,
aircon.
£2,195 ono
07968 444189 / 01902 428190.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

VAUXHALL MOVANO CREW CAB
Tippex, 2006, 3 months MoT.
£1,600 ono. 01902 895526.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

HONDA JAZZ I-TEC EXCVT
2012, 9,000 miles, blue, auto, superb condition. Panoramic roof. Top spec, fsh. Genuine reason for sale.
£7,300 ono.
07931 562064.

HYUNDAI I10 1.1 L CLASSIC
Petrol, 5 door, 2008, 23,700 miles, blue, electric windows, air bag, air con, long MoT, central locking, pas, CD, parking sensors.
£2,395.
07789 988655.

PRESTIGE

MERCEDES E350 CDI SE AUTO COUPE
2009, panoramic glass sunroof, comand sat nav, memory package, 17ins alloys, 6 disc CD/ DVD changer, 130k with FSH.
May PX for cheaper car. £8,950 ono
07836 204450 / deolsuk@hotmail.co.uk

TOYOTA COROLLA AUTO
2006, automatic, 57,654 Miles, Met black, electric windows and mirrors, air con, alarm, new mot, central locking, one owner, pas, Alloys, Colour Collection
£2,999 ono
01902858958

VAUXHALL ASTRA
2009, 42,600 Miles, convertible grey, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, alarm, long MoT, full Vauxhall s/h,
£2,800
07940 198062.

MUST BE SEEN

VOLVO S60 D5 SE
54 reg, metallic,
leather heated electric seats, xenon lights,
premium sound, 6CD,
60,000 miles from new,
one owner,
immaculate.
£2,500 ono
01902 380424.

10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

LOOK

GENUINE, CARING, SLIM ATTRACTIVE MAN, 54
Would like to meet genuine lady, 40-60 for friendship and evenings out.
Box Number P20875,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

sports clubs

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Please reply with your player profile, age, position and teams played for.
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Local Information

public & legal notices

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
www.dudley.gov.uk
Licensing Act 2003
Notice of application for a Club Premises Certificate (Section 71 of the Act)
Name of applicant or Club: The Yeltz Bar.
Name & Address of premises or club: Old Havne Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3TB
Statement of Relevant Licensable Activities or Relevant Qualifying Club Activities which it is proposed will be carried on or from the premises.
The Yeltz Bar has submitted an application to Dudley Council to obtain a club premises certificate. The licensable activities will include the performance of live music and recorded music on the given days and times below:
Monday to Friday - 23:00 to Midnight
Saturday - 23:00 to 1:00
Sunday - 23:00 to Midnight
Christmas Eve - 19:00 to Midnight
New Years Eve - 19:00 to 3:00
New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday, Summer Bank Holiday - 19:00 to Midnight
The licensable activities will also include the supply of alcohol and the sale by retail of alcohol on the given days and times below:
Monday to Friday - 11:00 to Midnight
Saturday - 11:00 to 1:00
Sunday - 11:00 to Midnight
Christmas Eve - 23:00 to Midnight
New Years Day - 19:00 to 3:00
New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Bank Holiday, Spring Bank Holiday, Summer Bank Holiday - 19:00 to Midnight
Non Standard hours will be:
Christmas Day - 11:00 to 16:00
The full application can be inspected by contacting the Licensing Section (see below) between the hours of 9.00am and 4.30pm (Monday to Friday except public holidays). An on-line summary of the application can be viewed on www.dudley.gov.uk
Any representations by a Responsible Authority or Interested Party must be made in writing before 19th July 2017 and 17th August 2017.
To Assistant Director of Law & Governance, Licensing Services, Unit 1 Hurst Business Park, Narrowsboot Way, Brierley Hill, DY5 1UF
It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5,000.

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WOLVERHAMPTON UTD TITANS UNDER 16S

2017/2018 looking for 2 or 3 players to streghthen squad.

For more information call
Wayne on 07814 635394.

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Please call Paul Harrison
07837 109131 or email
wolvessporting@yahoo.co.uk

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01902 317878

MARGARET ROSE BLUNT (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 9 Ridgfield Road Halesowen, West Midlands B62 8NE, who died on 02/06/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Executor on or before 19/10/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
Mr J Blunt
55 High Haden Road Cradley Heath
West Midlands B64 7PJ
T507803

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 719146
or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk** (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

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To Reply to members call: 0906 500 3955 calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

To Reply by text:
Text...REPLY26 (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter number & send to 80098 or: REPLY26 123456 hi get in touch... then send to 80098 Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Try it... You'll love it!

Been left a message? Pickup your replies on: 0906 500 3957 calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Dates in YOUR region

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

PEGGY young 58, married but lonely, WLTm a nice man similar age for days, evenings out and friendship. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025127

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual friendship with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

FEMALE 66, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out, looking for male, 68-75, for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 4416972

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

JAN 40s, small outgoing affectionate blonde, likes cuddles, seeks romantic male to share special times and bring sunshine into her life. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428089

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

MARY 46, shy curvy brunette looking for someone to be a good fun friend, to laugh with and love. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428073

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young. Looking for friends, maybe more with genuine gent. I'm feminine and curvy. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428157

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady, blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent and kind. Call me if you are interested in meeting up. Looks unimportant. Must be N/S. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428155

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979

CAROL, attractive lady 55yrs young, slim, tanned, brunette. If you are genuine and looking to date then call or text me. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428153

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+ Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428147

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves. Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205

GENUINE caring lady 65yrs, varied interests, solvent, loves life, feminine, WLTm gent of any age for life's pleasures. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428151

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851

RACHAEL, 50yrs, blue-eyed attractive lady, loves films, music and home life. WLTm gent 50-70yrs. ACA or text. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428149

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady looking for no strings midweek liaisons. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure with average looks. I want a similar man, GSOH looks unimportant. Age is but a number. I have no car but can accommodate. Text Only. Box: 4145368

IF you are interested in meeting an attractive black lady then please call me. I'm Nikki, 57yrs, attractive, interested and kind. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428145

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette with boyish leggy figure. N/S with GSOH. I've a good job and small flat which I own. Text Only. Box: 4099288

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, feminine, kind, loves life. Call me or text me your number and let's meet up. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428143

MANDY, 64yrs but still fit and sexy. Hoping to meet younger local lad for good daytime fun. Chats and texts any time. Text Only. Box: 4050784

ATTRACTIVE widow, attractive, blonde, GSOH, solvent and good figure. All that's missing is a nice man 60+. Call me if you are interested. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428139

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427897

CAROL, 60 something lady with a wicked sense of humour, please call or text for more info. I promise to reply to all callers. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428141

PAULINE, 59yrs, nurse who loves her uniform! I'm married but work odd hours so can meet easily. ACA. Text Only. Box: 4110283

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and has time on her hands. Would love to meet a much much much younger chap for carefree times. Text Only. Box: 4006039

LADY, 63, WLTm a gentleman of similar age, for friendship and outings. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428029

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very petite, kind and respectful Asian girl, hoping to meet an older white man. I'm 23yrs old and have just moved here. Text Only. Box: 4177099

ATTRACTIVE, slim brunette, 54, widow, kind, caring, romantic, enjoys the arts, sightseeing, dining out, seeks professional gent with GSOH and family values, with mutual interests. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428013

GEORGINA, 50s, attractive, happy blonde, loves sport, theatre, seeks intelligent, lively male to share the fun side of life with. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428053

SUE 53, voluptuous, outgoing, cuddly and bubbly, loves a joke and just wants fun, flirting and laughter in her life again, seeks her Mr Charming. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427913

MICHELLE, 28yrs blue eyed blonde with busty figure. I'm very mature for my age and hope to meet a man to care for. I'm willing to please. Call or text me and I will get straight back to you. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427649

Single Men

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714

TALL, dark, attractive male, 56, 6ft, WLTm an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109

FUN loving Irish man, seeks relationship, for fun times and going out. Please get in touch. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428077

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831

I am Kev, 57, looking for a lady in my life. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6023170

SHAUN, 50, honest, reliable, OHOC, employed, animal lover, likes walks in the country, meals out in country pubs, walking my dogs, looking for my soul mate. If you would like to know more get in touch. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427497

EMMA 56, active and always on the go, seeks fit, active, country loving guy who shares passion for the outdoors. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427811

ATTRACTIVE lady, 57yrs, great sense of humour, now looking for good times and good memories. Hoping to meet gent any age. ACA. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427883

GEMMA, 25yrs, green eyed brunette lady, loves to read nursery books so has a huge imagination, hoping to expand upon it in real life. Call me. ACA. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427881

ATTRACTIVE lonely widow, mid 70s seeking gent for friendship. Pls call or text. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427879

STUNNINGLY attractive black lady, 50s, with blissful imagination, you have to call to hear what's on offer, you won't be sorry! Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427877

CULTURED lady with wicked sense of humour, late 60s seeking humorous man for purposeful relationship. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427875

ATTRACTIVE lady, 51yrs, loves the countryside, walking, fun times. WLTm a genuine man for romance, relationship. Call or text me. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427873

RACHAEL, 42yrs, naughty girl who needs lots of pleasure. Call me. ACA. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427871

PAM, 40, cuddly feminine young looking female, OHAC, financially secure, looking for fun times without complications with likeminded male. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427753

Customer support
Call **0207 720 7130** Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm
or email us at **support@jmediauk.co.uk**

http://dating.expressandstar.com

CALL CHARGES: DATING 18+ and have the bill payer's permission. 0844 calls cost 7 pence per min, 090 calls cost £1.55 per min, plus your phone company's access charge. Calls are recorded and may appear on your bill. TEXT*: Text alerts are charged at £1.50 per week. To unsubscribe to text alerts, text DATING STOP to 63333. To cancel free match alerts, text STOP to 07781474042. For full T&Cs go to www.localdates-terms.co.uk. REPLY BY TEXT*: 80098/89990 costs £1.50 per SMS received (max 150 characters). Guaranteed up to 4 messages for each message you send. Service only available where phone icon shown. Messages are moderated. Minimum 7 messages must be sent before contact details can be exchanged. This service is not computer generated. All messages are responded to by real service users. No meetings can be guaranteed. If arranging a meeting be sure to choose a public space and do not give personal details to people you have not met. To STOP text stop to 80098/89990. Service provided by No Goats Ltd. Help: 0207 720 7130. ALL SERVICES*: By texting any shortcode you consent to the owner of that shortcode sending you the occasional marketing message. To opt out of receiving these send NO INFO to 80098. DATA PROTECTION: Service provided by JMedia UK Ltd, RH16 3EG, 0207 720 7130. We will collect the details you provide and may send you details of other services and events operated by us. We may pass your details into this newspaper for marketing or PhonePayPlus for regulatory purposes. Advertisers may come from our national database and from our pdc app, your ad may also appear on our dating app. wc. 31/07/17

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

To infinity and far beyond in headturner from Infiniti

By Andy Richardson

"Who made this car?"

A couple of fellas were walking through the park. They'd approached Infiniti Q50 – aka The Beast – slowly, like hunters stalking deer. They'd marvelled at its admirable grill, discreetly wondering whether they might smash open their pension pots and blow them on the sleek, black, Panther-esque lines.

And then they'd walked along its flanks, surreptitiously steeling a glance of the elongated bodywork, like men stealing a glance of the prettiest girl at the bar. When they reached the bumper, they stopped, pretending their dog had found something interesting in the grass, but all the while training their eyes on The Beast's ample booty.

"Who made it?" they asked, when I appeared from the driver's side.

I wanted to say 'a robot in Sunderland', but that would have seemed churlish. So I said Nissan. Nissan? Get that. The company that used to make the Datsun Cherry.

They did a double take, imagining I'd got it wrong and that The Beast was, in fact, by a German or American manufacturer. But, no, Nissan it was. The Japanese automotive manufacturer has a luxury brand – in much the same way that Lexus and Toyota are bound at the hip. And it competes with German rivals from BMW and Mercedes Benz in the luxury end of the market.

The curves certainly look Germanic. Sleek and confident, they make an instant impression. And the things that go on under the bonnet are equally enjoyable, making the Q50 a dream.

It's a car that fits into the UK's lucrative prestige saloon market, alongside the Audi A4, BMW 3-series and Mercedes C-class. It's fun to drive – slip it into Sport+ and it shoots out of the traces like an underfed greyhound chasing an overfed hare. The rev counter rises faster than a rocket on Bonfire Night as it tears up the road, chewing tarmac like Augustus Gloop with a chocolate bar – or, more accurately, hitting 0-60 in 5.1 seconds.

Knock it down to Eco, to save both polar bears and the time spent at the filling station, and it still offers



The curves make the car sleek and confident

knock-your-socks-off acceleration while offering decent economy at 42.2 mpg. Happy Days; Q50 is a fast car with a 3-litre engine that doesn't melt the Larsen C Ice Shelf into hundreds of tiny icebergs.

The technology is responsive and puts the fun into long journeys. A multimedia pack offers an Infiniti navigation system with traffic information and DAB. Bluetooth, a voice recognition system and a visibility pack that offers something smart called Around View Monitor – with moving object detection and parking guidance – makes it feel as though there's a co-pilot looking out for you on every mile of the road.

The infotainment package provides similar levels of luxury, with Bluetooth audio streaming, a BOSE Premium audio system, 14-speaker sound system, Active Noise Control and the normal USB/iPod connectivity, with an additional AUX-in RCA.

Safety and security were top of the list when the

boffins at Q50 HQ were designing their dirty black beast of a car. Opposed calliper sport brakes provide reassuring security while the A50 is fitted with six airbags, a hill start assist, an inbuilt tyre pressure monitoring system, auto dimming rear view mirror and vehicle security system with engine immobiliser. Then there's a blind spot warning system, lane departure prevention, predictive forward collision warning and distance control assistance.

All of which makes the Infiniti Q50 an empowering drive that combines power with precision, subtlety with style, comfort with out-and-out grunt. With supermodel looks and Silicon Valley-esque technology, it's a power-punching all-rounder that dukes it out with its more illustrious peers in a reasonably prestigious category.

The fellas in the park had never seen anything like it. But, judging by their questions about price, performance and the location of the nearest dealership, at least one was thinking of seeing a lot more of it.



Prepare well before getting in the car

Where the children are number one

The summer holidays are here and many families will be packing for success as they set off to enjoy and travel. These tips give advice on driving with children from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards, Richard Gladman.

Be patient.

Sometimes children can drive parents potty but it is important to remain calm and keep them entertained. Playing games whilst travelling and keeping them occupied is always a recipe for success. Make sure all their tech is working before you set off. A flat battery on a phone can be major disaster for today's connected kids.

Pack for success.

Make sure you have a food bag with goodies for the best behaved but avoid too much sugar. Fruit and water are best. Also carry wet wipes and spare clothes that are easy to access within the car. The right car seat will keep your child safe and comfortable. Check out the Good Egg guide <http://www.goodeggcarsafety.com/> for the latest information.

Know your journey.

The worst thing is being lost with a grumpy child in the back. Know the correct stop-off points so you know when you can take breaks, so the children can get out and stretch their legs. Children need regular stops – never go more than two hours without a stop. For very young babies too long in a car seat can be stressful, so factor this in when you plan your journey.

Set off early.

Travelling long distances with little ones can be nightmare. If you set off early and take your time as opposed to rushing to your destination the journey will be miles smoother. But, remember driving when you would normally be asleep is a risk factor, so make sure you are fully awake by taking frequent breaks and sharing the driving.

Official stopping distances queried by safety charity

Official stopping distances listed in the Highway Code are inaccurate, a road safety charity has claimed.

Brake has published research that suggests official figures for stopping distances underestimate the reaction times of drivers.

Conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory on behalf of the charity, the research showed that the average thinking time for motorists to respond to emergency situations is 1.5 seconds – more than twice the 0.67 seconds the Highway Code sets out.

As a result, the average total stopping distance – including thinking and braking distance – is 34 metres at 30mph, 11 metres further than stated in the Highway Code.

Jason Wakeford, spokesman for Brake, said: "These figures suggest stopping distances taught to new drivers in the Highway Code fall woefully short."

"Even though car braking technology has improved in recent years, the majority of the overall stopping distance at most speeds is actually made up of the time taken to perceive

the hazard and react. The research shows that average thinking time is more than double that set out in the Highway Code."

A true understanding of how long it takes to stop a car in an emergency is one of the most important lessons for new drivers. Understanding true average thinking time reminds all drivers how far their car will travel before they begin to brake – as well as highlighting how any distraction in the car which extends this time, like using a mobile phone, could prove fatal.

"Brake is calling on the Government to increase the stopping distances in the Highway Code as a matter of urgency."

In response, a Department for Transport spokesperson said: "We have some of the safest roads in the world and we are always looking at ways to make them safer."

"Stopping distances in the Highway Code are intended to inform motorists of the thinking and braking time needed to stop a vehicle at different speeds. We will carefully consider these findings."



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Reliability counts for more than good looks

Perfect family driving mile after mile in this Suzuki

By Andy Richardson

When the SX4 S Cross was being created, the design team presumably took a dozen or more families to one side, plied them with bottles of continental lager and said this: "Draw up a wishlist. Tell us everything you'd like to find in a decent, spacious family car."

And the guys with the continental lager went away and came up with a really, really, really long list.

It would have said things like: cruise control, the option to flit between automatic and manual, paddle controls on the steering wheel if you want to change gear so you haven't got to bother with a clutch – God, clutches are so 1972 – a radar warning system that slows things down if you approach the traffic ahead too quickly, heated seats with options for super warm and merely snugly. There'd be an integrated, digital entertainment console with DAB, USB, SatNav, Bluetooth and touch screen controls as well as smart buttons on the steering column.

And then, while they were getting in another round of continental lager and ordering burgers in brioche buns with extra pickle, they'd ask for three different drive modes – a regular, around-town-or-on-the-motorway mode, a sports mode for when you need to put your foot down and make the engine roar and then a snow/



There's plenty of storage in the boot

mud 4x4 mode for off-road fun days. There'd be basic comforts, plenty of storage in a split-level boot, the ability for the driver to disable rear window controls in case the kids are getting restless and lowering the windows on the motorway and then there'd be a humungous sun roof that covered both driver and passenger in the front and the kids in the back. Oh, and before they polish off the last of their beers, they'd ask for shiny black alloy wheels, rear privacy glass, LED lights, knee bags as well as airbags, just in case anything ever went wrong.

The guys in the bar would smile a satisfied smile, hand in their lists and present them to Suzuki Design Co.

At that point, most self-respecting car manufacturers would look at the list, mutter something like 'are you joking, that'll cost a fortune' before ignoring the focus group's wish list and coming up with suggestions that are far more utilitarian and, frankly, not as damned expensive.

And yet the team behind the SX4 S Cross have done something remarkable. They've packed so much new technology into their car that it's difficult to know whether you should drive it or programme it. It's intuitive and responsive, it's light on its feet, the stereo pounds like Friday night in Da Klub.

For sure, the SX4 S Cross isn't the sexiest looking car on the market – neither inside nor out. It's a little clunky and a bit plastic-ey. It's a little bit boy-or-girl-next-door, rather than Hollywood Swoon Biscuit. But Hollywood Swoon Biscuit can be notoriously fickle while him-or-her-next-door is reliable, tried-and-trusted and avoids excess.

And when it comes to good family cars, reliability wins out every time.

The SX4 S Cross drives beautifully. Suzuki's new BoosterJet technology packs plenty of torque into its ramped up 1.4 litre petrol engine while also providing better fuel economy than the 1.6 litre engine. Which is pretty clever, really.

It's sturdy and robust, a genuine Scrum Half of a car that's not going to get buffeted about on windy motorways and remains rigid and upright while off-roading.

Sporty and dynamic, the SX4 S Cross combines stylish, city-orientated designs with genuine off-road capability.

The value for money that it offers is, frankly, astonishing. Comfort and convenience, sophistication and style: the SX4 S Cross offers perfect family driving, mile after mile.

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Former England captain Ted Dexter is now a member of the club after moving to the area



Captain David Barnes (standing) looks on from the balcony at Lord's during the 1973 National Knockout final



Wolverhampton Cricket Club captain James Hammond



The impressive new net facility at Danescourt

Pushing the boundaries to get city into cricket

SPORTING FEATURE

By Tim Spiers

IT may be a well-worn cliché but in this case it's certainly apt – James Hammond wants to put Wolverhampton cricket on the map.

The sport may trail behind football, speedway and boxing for the city's affections.

But Hammond, captain of Wolverhampton Cricket Club, believes the interest is there – and he's keen for his club to exploit it.

A £60,000 makeover of the club's Danescourt Road ground in Tettenhall will certainly help. The picturesque ground boasts new nets and covers, of county cricket standard, for the players, while fans can watch the action from a charming decking area.

You might even find yourself sitting next to former England captain Ted Dexter who, aged 82, has recently moved to Wolverhampton from his home in France to be nearer to his family and has become a club member.

Excellent

Next up, Hammond hopes, will be positive results on the pitch.

A run to the quarter-finals of the National Knockout has helped create a buzz around Danescourt as the current side bid to emulate the legendary Wolverhampton sides of 1973 and 1999 who lifted club cricket's most prestigious trophy on never-to-be-forgotten days at Lord's.

Wolverhampton beat The Mote from Kent in their first appearance at the home of cricket and then overcame Middlesex outfit Teddington in 1999.

A home tie with Ockbrook & Borrowash now awaits on August 6 and Hammond, who bagged five wickets in the last 16 victory over Bootle, is hoping it will capture the attention of the city's cricket fans.

"We just need to get more people to come and watch



Vikram Solanki, ex-Wolverhampton, in England colours

us now," he said. "Results will help, people want to see a winning side."

"The new facilities are excellent. With the covers, we'd have eight or nine games called off per season before, but now it's three or four."

"There's so much space here and we've got the capacity for another 100, 200, 300 people."

"We've got to create that buzz, especially on social media and things like that which we're trying to push and promote more."

While 62-times-capped legend Dexter is a very welcome addition to the Wolverhampton ranks, it's future legends that the club wants to produce more than anything.

That said, they've helped nurture their fair share of county players in recent years, as 25-year-old

Hammond is keen to point out. "We've got Ted here through connections, which is great," he added. "Dave Lycett and Chris Bowyer have done a great job fundraising and promoting the club on the social side of things, holding a lot of things in the winter as you need to create that revenue for 12 months."

"To have Ted here is lovely. Wine and cheese nights – not many clubs will be doing that! It can only help boost our exposure."

"We've also got, hopefully, a few future legends. We've had a lot of pros who've come through the ranks – I can't name other clubs who've produced the number of first class cricketers that we have."

In the last 15 or 20 years the likes of current Worcestershire player Tom Fell and Vikram Solanki, who also played for the county and represented England, have played through the age groups to adult cricket at Wolverhampton.

Toughest

Aneesh Kapil and Chris Russell, two more former Worcestershire players, have also played for the club. Hammond added: "And Birmingham League Cricket is a great place to play your cricket. It's one of the toughest leagues in the country."

"Plus there's been a raft of overseas players that have come and gone and a few more young stars before my time."

In the most urban of cities, situated in the football hotbed that is the Black Country, it can be hard for local cricket to get the exposure it deserves.

Hammond believes more competitions between local clubs could help attract interest – and maybe see Wolverhampton Cricket Club competing with Wolves, or Wolverhampton Speedway, for the city spotlight.

"It's not just us, there are so many good small clubs in the area," he said.

"We should bring those games back because we don't play half the sides anymore."

"We might play Himley occasionally but we don't play Fordhouses, Penn, Wightwick & Finchfield or Codsall as much as we should. There's the Black Country T20 week but a cup organised with more local teams would be good."

"You associate Wolverhampton with football, speedway and maybe boxing, but the interest in cricket is up there."

Sykes back on track after Welsh success

STOURBRIDGE rally driver Richard Sykes heads into the Tyneside stages of British Rally Championship this weekend on the back of two successful days on the Nicky Grist Stages event in Wales.

Sykes finished first two wheel drive car on the first day and second on day two in his Batham's Brewery, G I Sykes Ltd, The Body Clinic, Staniland Marina and Summit Platforms-supported Citroën DS3 R3.

Sykes has had a relatively quiet year so far with his season not starting until the Somerset Stages in April. He was leading the 'Silver Star' category for two wheel drive cars until he hit a rock which holed the radiator, forcing him into retirement. He had better luck on the Carlisle Stages in Cumbria, finishing joint first and only losing maximum points on a tie-break due to the other driver being quicker on the opening stage.

Next up is the Tyneside Stages which held on the Otterburn ranges in Northumberland on Sunday followed by an event at Donington Park and then two more Silver Star rallies, the Woodpecker and Trackrod Stages.

Gazza returns to the region for Q&A night

PAUL Gascoigne is set to return to the West Midlands next month for a live question and answer session.

The former England star will take the stage at The H Suite in Birmingham on September 15 to tell the story of the highs and lows of his football career and beyond.

It marks Gazza's first appearance on stage in the region since his infamous 2015 show at Wolverhampton Civic Hall, which resulted in a court appearance after he admitted making a racist comment to a security guard.

The event, which is being put on by Wolverhampton-based promoters Showfighter UK, also offers meet and greet opportunities with Gazza and features a meal and a memorabilia auction.

Showfighter UK director Andy Sahota said: "Our Three Lions-themed evening will be a celebration of one of England's most iconic footballers."

Further details and tickets are available at www.showfighter.co.uk/events

Rutter is back on superbikes podium

BRIERLEY Hill-born Michael Rutter returned to the circuits after another successful stint on the roads in Finland to secure two more podiums in the National Superstock 1000 Championship.

The 45-year-old rider claimed two seconds and a fourth on the Bathams/SMT Racing BMW at Brands Hatch. It means Danny Buchan still leads the championship from Richard Cooper with Rutter maintaining third place, 13.5 points clear of Chrissy Rouse.

Meanwhile, Kurt Wigley, 21, from Hednesford, brought his Sorrymate.com Yamaha home in 11th and 12th places in the British Supersport series to sit 15th in the championship.

Twin brother Matt had an operation last week to cement his crushed vertebrae following a bad crash in the National Superstock 1000 class and is on the mend – and says he is 'looking forward to returning'.

The British Superbike support classes now head to Thruxton, in Hampshire, for round seven this weekend, from tomorrow to Sunday.



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It's Hall or nothing in play-offs bid

RICHARD HALL is counting down the days to his Cradley debut.

Hall, a former top flight title winner with Peterborough, has been drafted in to bolster the Heathens for a late play-off push. He will make his bow at Birmingham when they face the Isle of Wight next Wednesday, August 9.

He was unavailable on Monday night, when Heathens went down 56-34 to Kent. Hall said: "For the last few years I've been involved, I just feel I've been messed around no matter where I've ended up.

"Everything seemed okay at Redcar earlier this season then they got rid of me. I then went to Peterborough and again, empty promises were made and I'd just had enough.

"I was ready to pack it all in and I was just starting to sell some of my equipment. But Cradley came calling and I couldn't say no really.

"Cradley are a massive club, especially at this level and they've still got ambitions to do well.

"I followed the meeting on Monday at Kent and it was disappointing to see them lose like that.

"We know we need to beat the Isle of Wight – and we could do with hitting a big score as well to remind everyone of what we can do and show them how we mean to go on until the end of the season.

"I still think Cradley can make the play-offs – but we know we need to win all of our meetings to give ourselves a chance.

Hopes of county are pinned on debutant Norman

IT was a quiet weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club with only one solitary member pinning on a number and racing.

But it wasn't the two-tone blue hooped vest the number was being pinned to. Instead it was the royal blue vest with the single yellow band of Shropshire.

Dave Norman pulled on the county colours to race in the Meerbrook 15k, a race including an inter-counties competition between Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire.

It was a tough county debut for the DK runner with the first two miles climbing up Gunn Hill, an incline often used on cycling's Tour Of Britain to decide King of the Mountains points. After a long undulating loop through the Staffordshire Moorlands countryside the course plummeted down that same hill to the finish giving runners the opportunity to make up for lost time going in the opposite direction some time earlier.

Finishing with a fair old rattle down that last hill Norman crossed the line in 1.04.43 to claim 50th position in a field approaching 400.

Baker out to Kane rival before Benn bout



Kane Baker fights at The Venue on Saturday

KANE Baker steps into the ring in Dudley this weekend ahead of a bout against Nigel Benn's son Conor next month.

Baker, from Bartley Green, accepted the bout at short notice for the 02 Arena in London on July 1. The two welterweights were prevented from getting it on, though, when the British Boxing Board of Control discovered Baker's medical clearance had expired. Benn, aged just 20, instead halted southpaw Michael Cole, who stepped in with a day to spare, by third round stoppage. Baker, 27, has

undergone his annual medical since and passed with flying colours, so can box again.

But before the September 1 bout he takes on the rarely-stopped Qasim Hussain over four rounds at The Venue on Saturday.

Rowley Regis' Tyler Denny and Dudley's Les Byfield feature, while hot prospect Ekow Essuman will box in the Black Country for the first time as a professional. Another Brummie, Daryl Pearce, makes up the home corner. For tickets, at £35 and £50, call 07939 588 810.

Pre-season ending with trip to Bulls

STOURBRIDGE FC round off their preparations for the 2017-18 season on Saturday with a trip to take on Southern League Premier title favourites Hereford FC at Edgar Street (kick-off 3pm).

The Glassboys have been invited to contest the Herefordshire FA Senior Invitational Cup against the home side, a trophy that dates back to the early 1950s.

Last Saturday, Gary Hackett's men suffered their first defeat in pre-season when they slipped to a 2-1 loss away at Alvechurch. Two successfully converted penalties by ex-Stour midfielder Tom Turton on 11 and 39 minutes, either side of an equalising goal from summer signing Jordan Murphy, were enough to give the home side victory, but the Glassboys were forced to play the last 15 minutes a man short after substitute Aaron Forde was ordered off for showing dissent towards the referee.

Stourbridge will be selling season tickets and flexi-tickets for the new season from their club shop at the War Memorial Ground this Sunday, August 6, between 11am and 12.30pm.

Club officials have now confirmed that their opening league fixture at home to Matlock Town will be played on August 13, with a 3pm kick-off as there is cricket taking place at Amblecote the day before.

Monkton is placed among the top 10

BLACK Country Triathlete Ben Monkton travelled to Snowdonia to compete in the Snowman full distance triathlon which involved a 1km swim in Llyn Mymbyr at Plas y Brenin, a 70km ride through the heart of Snowdonia National Park, followed by a brutal 9km run with the first 3km gaining about 650m of ascent to the summit of Moel Siabod.

Monkton finished in an overall time of 3:44:36 and seventh overall.

Closer to home, at the Blithfield Sprint and Standard triathlon, Keith Bate came home first for the club in the sprint in 1:17:02, first in the over 60 age group. Oliver Evans finished third junior in 1:18:32 and Leigh-Ann Adams finished in 1:48:51. Edward Horgan completed the Standard distance race in 3:01:13, 25th Super Vet.

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Dylan shines in crunch win

HALESOWEN'S 35-run win over Fordhouses keeps them in the race for promotion from Division Two with Pershore, who were 119-run victors at Old Elizabethans.

Fordhouses slip to second in the table, nine points behind Oswestry, who return to the top after an easy nine-wicket win against Sutton Coldfield.

Fordhouses' opening bowlers Kashif Hussein (3 for 35) and Chris Guest (3-52) made Halesowen struggle for every run of their score of 177, a total that they reached thanks to 50 from 96 balls by Dylan Ross-Watt.

He was involved in stands of 57 for the ninth wicket and 30 for the last, then took 3-58 as Fordhouses were bowled out for 142. Richard Brooker finished them off with 3-6 after Ross-Watt had taken the early wickets.

Amazing

Speaking after a tensely fought battle Brooker said: "It's been quite an amazing few weeks to be honest. Credit due to all the players but especially to Dylan. This is his second year with us and his attitude and work rate around the club and the team is first class and he is getting the results for him and us. However, next week is another tester with Oswestry coming to us and again we need to grab back some points differentials to stay with the leading pair."

The second XI managed to do the double over high-flying Knowle and Dorridge.

Restricting them to 133 thanks to three-wicket hauls from Nathan Hines and Naim Luhar – topped off with 4-33 from Charlie Greening – Halesowen then began well, climbing to 75-0 before Williams (28) and Luhar (38) were dismissed. This left Joe Tromans (30no) to see the side home and close the points gap to 21 for Premier Division safety.

The third team picked up a victory over Hanley Castle thanks mainly to Archie Reeves (3-17).

Baby boon for champ Whiley



Jordanne Whiley in action at Wimbledon where she won the wheelchair doubles

HALESOWEN wheelchair tennis star Jordanne Whiley has confirmed she won her fourth successive Wimbledon women's wheelchair doubles title while pregnant.

The 25-year-old teamed up with Japan's Yui Kamiji to win the title, and Whiley has since tweeted to announce her pregnancy with partner and coach Marc McCarroll. Whiley opened up about playing while pregnant, which Serena

Williams also did in January when she won the Australian Open. "I thought, 'If we start trying in May I could still play Wimbledon, and it worked,'" she said. "But I had no idea how incredibly sick I'd be.

"At the French Open, I was really, really ill. I thought it was a stomach bug. Even the doctors thought it was a stomach bug. But by Wimbledon I was a little more prepared."

Angling Direct Halesowen

176 Long Lane, Halesowen, Birmingham B62 9EP

☎: 0121 2275 665

www.anglingdirect.co.uk

✉: info@anglingdirect.co.uk

